

アロハ座長

イラスト＊ゆきさん

Presented by Aloha Zachou
Illustration by Yukisan



ファンタジア文庫

Illustrations

アロハ座長

イラスト★ゆきさん

Presented by Aloha Zachou
Illustration by Yukisan



ファンタジア文庫

Only Sense オンライン Online

10





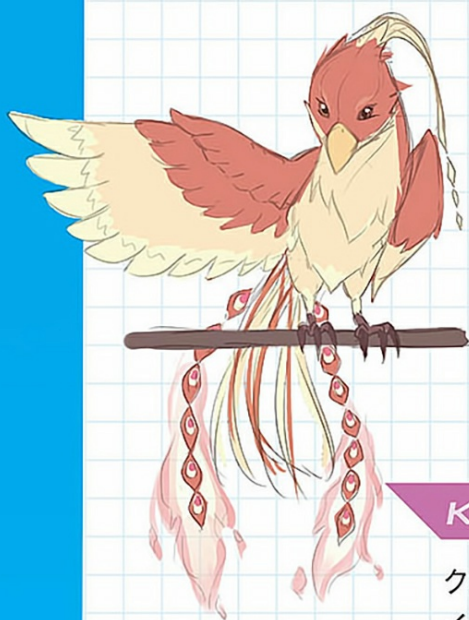
Ryui リウイ

ユニコーン
ユンの使役する一角獣。水と浄化の魔法によって、対象となるプレイヤーの身を守る。成獣化によって隠ぺい能力が強化され、触れたものにまで及ぶようになった



ネシアス Nesias

フェニックス
リーリーの使役する不死鳥。
【蘇生】によって、対象となるプレイヤーを死の底から蘇らせる。
寒いときは、尻尾の火が少しだけ役に立つ



Kutusita クツシタ

ラック・キャット
クロードの使役する幸運猫。プレイヤーのLUKのステータスを向上させる。アイテム発見率などにかわり、生産職への貢献は大きい



リクール Ricoeur

フェンリル
マギの使役する魔氷狼。氷塊を生み出し、対象の敵に向かって撃ちだすことができる。成獣化によって伸びた爪と牙は、数多くの敵を薙ぎ払う

Character



ユン Yun

A beginner player who chose the worst weapon, a [Bow] and debuted as a crafter. After making full use of enchants and items he started to notice certain possibility—



ミュウ Myu

Yun's real little sister. One-handed sword and light magic-using paladin. A cheat-level player who became a legend in β version.



マギ Magi

An Onee-san who's a weapon dealer counted as one of the top crafters. She's a reliable senior who advises Yun.



セイ Sei

Yun's real older sister. A magic user who manipulates water element. Same as Myu she is a unmatched legendary β player.



タク Taku

The player who made Yun start playing OSO. He's a guide-using gamer who uses one-handed sword and light armour.

クロード Cloude

A weaver. One of the top crafters, shopkeeper of a store which sells tailored equipment. He is the one who created Yun's and Magi's original "Cloude Series" equipment.

リーリー Lyly

One of the top crafters, a first-class woodworker. He crafts staves and bows, which in turn makes him incredibly popular.

Prologue - Exchange Items and a Small Problem

OSO's winter event which used time-limited quest as a theme had been ongoing.

In the game in question, OSO, inside a store named 【Atelier】 which handled potions and consumables, I was checking the store's stock in the workshop part.

"As the event progresses, there's lots of people who came to purchase items necessary for delivery-type quests and I need to make sure the stock doesn't run out."

As I muttered so and checked the stock of items whose number of daily sales was restricted, I saw the sales had temporarily increased compared to usual.

"Since I still have a stock of materials, there should be no problems during this event. As for other problems... hm?"

After checking the item stock, I checked the stock of crafting materials and raised my voice in doubt.

The materials used for crafting in 【Atelier】 were either grown on my own field or purchased from other players, as well as left to Kyouko-san the NPC to purchase from NPC vendors and stalls.

In the stock of those materials, the amount of some items harvested – mainly those cultivated on the field – has slightly decreased.

"What does this mean? Let's ask Kyouko-san."

Finding Kyouko-san store-tending, I called out to her.

"Kyouko-san, can I ask you something?"

"Yes, what is it?"

The owner of a charming face, Kyouko-san had tilted her head lightly. I asked her about the changes in harvest I have found earlier.

"Yield for some cultivated items has decreased a little over the last few days, do you maybe know why?"

"Yes. It's because the growth of the plants has been delayed by the changes in temperature."

Hearing Kyouko-san's words, I realized that the reduction in the amount harvested has to do with the recent update introducing environmental 【Cold Damage】.

"I see. So 【Cold Damage】 not only affects players but also things like that."

I was absorbed in taking measures against the 【Cold Damage】 before the update and later, I was concentrating on the winter quest, so I left 【Atelier】's management to Kyouko-san, which was why I was late to notice this.

"Herb-type materials are strong against cold and heat so they can be harvested steadily over the entire year without a difference, but any kind of material that has flowers blooming requires insects to carry pollen, so their growth is slowed down during winter."

Saying so, Kyouko-san lowered her eyebrows apologetically.

"It doesn't cause a big influence, but having the amount decreased is a little troubling."

While I held my head in my arms, Kyouko-san proposed a few countermeasures.

"The best way to improve yields is to cultivate plants in a warm place. For example, by transplanting them into a planter and relocating to a warmer area."

"I see, got it. I'll think of those countermeasures, please work as usual Kyouko-san."

"Yes, I understand."

Seeing Kyouko-san lower her head slightly I smiled and with the store's stock check completed, I headed to the location I have promised to meet with an acquaintance.

"Ryui, Zakuro. We'll be going out, come."

When I called out, Zakuro, the black fox's young beast who was warming himself up by the stove installed at the store section of 【Atelier】, had ran up to my feet then climbed up over my body to snugly enter the hood of my winter clothes.

While I smiled bitterly at the fact that it has already become Zakuro's special seat, my other partner, Unicorn Ryui quietly stood up and walked up next to me.

I stroked Ryui's mane which was placed in perfect position under my hand and walked out.

"Well then, let's head to Lyly's store."

Today, a crafters' tea party was held in Lyly's store.

Taking Ryui and Zakuro with me I headed to 【Lyly's Woodworking Shop】 located on the Eastern side of the main street which connected Eastern and Western sides of the town.

The inside of the store was bustling as usual. When I slipped beside other players and headed to the counter, a clerk NPC had guided us towards the back.

Based on the store's appearance, the black door I was guided to was installed in a place where it should lead to nowhere. When I opened the door without any hesitation and entered inside——

——There was a wide plain and a plantation far in the distance. I could also see a big building that functioned as a shipyard.

The plain created with the 【Ownership of a Personal Field】 Lyly acquired during the summer camp event was filled with warmth and there was good weather. Feeling hot in winter clothes, I loosened them a little by the chest.

"It's soo warm in here."

At the same time I murmured, Zakuro who was completely hidden inside the hood had come out and Ryui has turned into his adult form, releasing his restricted abilities.

"Heeey, Yuncchi, over heere～!"

I must have been seen as I stepped out of the black doors as I saw a figure in front of the shipyard's building wave its hand and walk my way.

"Welcome, Yuncchi."

Lined up on top of the table handmade by Lyly were tea and sweets. First, I said greetings towards Cloude and Lyly who were here first.

"Cloude, Lyly, did you wait?"

"No, it's no problem. However, today Magi suddenly cancelled her participation."

"Eh?! Is that so?"

I felt a little disappointed hearing Cloude's words. Just the other day I exchanged information with Magi-san so there was no information I wanted, but I was looking forward to everyone participating.

Seeing my reaction, Cloude softened his expression and spoke the reason Magi-san's absence.

"Well, the reason Magi isn't participating is because Ricœur has turned adult."

"He?! That's great news."

Surprised by the sudden report, my voice turned comical. But after hearing in more detail, my mood was uplifted.

I wonder how does the young wolf look as an adult. Did it turn to look like a normal wolf? And it might also turn cool with fangs and nails turning long and sharp.

Imagining that, I looked forward to seeing him.

"So, that's how it is. Magi is absent because she's now verifying Ricœur's adult form. Now, let's begin the tea party."

The tea party where unusually one person was missing has mainly focused on consultation over adult Ryui's armour, winter quest event soon reaching the turning point and the newly acquired information.

"All right, since our tamed mobs are growing adult one after another, I'll make equipment for them..."

"Kyu..."

"Cloude..."

"Kurocchi..."

Feeling the heat of this space I took off the winter clothes and folded them on top of my knee, furthermore on top of which Zakuro lied down. Hearing Zakuro's sad voice, the three of us looked towards him.

"Mm, my bad."

"You don't have to worry, Zakuro. Take your time growing."

When I comforted him like that, my feelings were relayed and Zakuro settled down a little. Ryui who felt like they were in the way of the conversation, took Zakuro, Cloude's Lucky Cat Socks and Lyly's tamed mob, Phoenix Neshias, into the plains to spend time playing.

"...Back to the subject. My Socks and Lyly's Neshias remain support-type mobs even after growing adult, so I think that accessory-type equipment would be good for them. However, Yun's Ryui is a mob that can be mounted. Isn't it more important to make something that will make you ride him in more stable manner, rather than focus on defence?"

Just as Cloude said, previously when I rode Ryui without equipment it was quite unstable and there was a large burden on my body. Whenever I rode him, I clung to his neck and was unable to do anything, which was troubling.

"You're right. I think it's important that I am able to use the bow while I ride Ryui."

"It's decided then. Do you have any detailed request?"

Asked by him, I put my index finger on my chin.

"Not in particular, I guess. Although I would be happy if you kept decorations in moderation."

"I see, then let's immediately measure Ryui's adult form and decide on the design."

Cloude grinned and turned to look towards Ryui running lightly on the plain.

That moment, probably feeling his stare, Ryui accelerated all at once as if to run away. However, that movement had seemed to have stimulated Cloude's inspiration even further as he pulled out a measure and started the pursuit after Ryui with a fearless smile.

"Hahahahaha! Let me measure your adult-turned body!"

While I stared with a cramped expression as Cloude chases after Ryui, Lyly changed the subject with a wry smile.

"Oh right. Yuncchi, did you decide how to use Quest Chips yet?"

Just the other day the first week of three-week long winter's quest event had passed and information on new events has been announced.

I operated the menu and displayed the official event information.

"Even as I look at this, there's nothing that catches my attention."

What appeared in front of me, was a list of items you could exchange chips for.

Quest Chips collected during the event could be exchanged for items at the end of it, but there were various item types you could acquire.

An individual player could exchange each chip for 30kG, and a guild could exchange over 300 chips at once to acquire, for example, a 【Huge Field's Ownership】.

Other than that, there were unique items and 【Random Box】 that dropped items at random. Other than that, among the rewards there were items that have been rewarded to winners of summer camp event before.

However, there was nothing in particular that I wanted.

"I have 25 chips on me now, so I can exchange them for 3 of 【Random Boxes】, but I'm not really interested in those."

"Is that so. But the event will continue for two weeks longer, how about you aim for higher prizes, Yuncchi? For the time being, I aim for 50 chips."

If I reached that many, the number of things I could acquire would grow to the point where I'd have a hard time checking all of them, but it was a good

place to aim for.

"What are you aiming for with those 50 chips?"

"Me? Hmm. Actually I didn't decide on anything yet, either. For the time being I want to collect 50 and exchange the ones I don't use for items the 【Crafting Guild】 requires."

"I see. But I'm a solo-player so I can't really exchange chips for items aimed at guilds. Hmm, what should I get..."

While drinking tea I stared at the list of exchange items in the menu, and recalled the conversation I had with Kyouko-san before leaving 【Atelier】.

"Speaking of which, because of 【Cold Damage】's implementation, some of herbs I cultivate had their yield decreased."

"Hmm. It didn't affect my forestation though."

"Yun said that it's just some of his herbs that had yield decreased, that must mean there are some that are easily affected by cold. In that respect, Lyly has an advantage since his personal field is not influenced by seasons."

Finishing to measure Ryui, with his clothes completely dishevelled by full-speed dash yet with a satisfied expression, Cloude had come back and joined the conversation.

"Welcome back, Cloude. So like I said, I was wondering if there was an item that could reduce the changes in temperature, but..."

To acquire 【Ownership of a Personal Field】, 100 Quest Chips were required, it was beyond my level of skill to acquire that much during the duration of the event.

"Hmm. Although it's not one of the items on the exchange lists, from methods I can think of, it would be creating a new base in a warm place. For example, how about 【Demonfolk Resort】?"

The higher part of the Volcano Area where demihuman mobs created a dungeon town——the 【Demonfolk Resort】.

What Cloude was proposing here, was purchasing a home for players inside that dungeon.

"Certainly, that might work as one of the countermeasures, but it's much more expensive compared to buying a home in the First Town."

The 【Demonfolk Resort】 was a place where the cheapest home had a cost of 10mG. Converting that to Quest Chips, it would be over 300 chips, which made it unrealistic.

"Sigh, there is no really good countermeasures. In the worst case, I will place them inside planters and in the room despite the fact the cultivated number will be small, or buy a new field in order to increase the amount of cultivation that way."

With that said, I didn't want to decrease amount of space inside 【Atelier】 with planters, nor wish to increase the amount of trouble with management of the fields.

"Well, there's still over two weeks of the event, I'll look over the list of items again before it ends. Thanks for the tea."

The tea party with Cloude and Lyly had ended, I stood up from the seat and thanked the two.

"Mm? You're leaving earlier than usual, do you have something planned for now?"

"Yeah, after this I'm going to learn new recipes from 【Mixing】 Sense's event quest."

"Then, do your best. I'll prepare equipment for Ryui on my side. I'll contact you once it's ready."

"Okay, see you then, Yuncchi. Let's have another tea party later!"

When I put the winter clothes back on, Zakuro had slipped back onto his special seat. I stroked Ryui's back who had tired himself out by running away from Cloude and returned back to young beast form. Taking the two, I left 【Lyly's Woodworking Store】.

Afterwards, instead of returning back to 【Atelier】 I entered a certain shop in a back street, a street away from the main street.

Chapter 1 - Medium-Level Recipes and Unveiling

After splitting with Cloude and Lyly I headed to the pharmacy.

An eerie-looking shop which had exterior decorated with ivy. Discoloured due to age, the shop I carried my legs into looked more of a witch's house than a pharmacy.

"Ohh, you're so late I've got tired of waiting."

"I came to learn the potions' recipes."

When I exchanged words with the NPC owner of this shop, an eccentric-looking old woman Obaba, snorted and stood up before entering the back of the shop with steady steps.

"Hurry up and come! Time is limited!"

"C-coming now!"

I told Ryui and Zakuro to wait by the counter, then chased after Obaba, entering the workshop in the back.

In the workshop, there stood a board with several pieces of paper on it. It looked similar to the event's quest board.

"Now, do the work I haven't done while I was sick, you'll be doing it in my place. Once you do, I will complete the requests that have piled up. Like that, you will be able to memorize the recipes I know. It's what you call 'give and take'."

After saying that, she prompted me with her chin to go in front of the board, as if telling me to choose one.

【Delivery of MP Pots (15)】——2 Quest Chips
【Delivery of Yellow Potions (15)】——1 Quest Chip
【Delivery of Demon's Wonder Pills (15)】——1 Quest Chip
【Delivery of Holy Mountain's Magic Water (15)】——1 Quest Chip
【Delivery of Resistance-Granting Potions of Four Types (30 of each set)】——
10 Quest Chips 【Delivery of Magical Drug: Echo Liquid (5) 】——2 Quest Chips
【Delivery of Magical Drug: Flash Liquid (5) 】——2 Quest Chips
【Delivery of Magical Drug: Blinding Liquid (5) 】——2 Quest Chips

Affixed on it were delivery-type quests like the ones I did before, but the only reward for all of them were Quest Chips.

Well, thinking of the fact that I can get a new recipe in the process, this was quite reasonable.

I already knew some of those potions, but there also were potions and magical drugs I didn't know as well as a multiple set delivery. All of that made me quite excited.

"Now, which one will you make first? In the worst case, if I don't manage to teach you all I will sell you a book with the recipes, the 【Intermediate Pharmacist's Tech Book】. ——For 1mG."

"So expensive?! As if I'd dish it out just like that!"

"Knowledge will turn into money. You'll earn that much right away. C'mon, c'mon."

While saying so, Obaba showed off the leather-covered book, I——

"I don't have enough with me, I'll buy it later."

"Hohoho, thanks for your patronage. Well then, before you buy the book let's make one simple thing from a recipe."

Obaba said and urged me to receive a quest.

I requested the 【Delivery of Mega Potions】 from among the pieces of paper on the board.

"Oh-ho, so that's what you choose. Fine, I'll teach you how to make it. With that said, making of Mega Potions is the same as that of Potions and High Potions."

With that said, Obaba pulled out a herb-type, higher level item of Medicinal Spirit Grass – **【Mystic Medicinal Grass】**.

"You boil this Mystic Medicinal Grass like you do herbs for Potions and add water to make it. However, it is necessary to add one more process in the middle of crafting it. That is the way of making intermediate-level medicines and drugs."

"And what is that process in question?"

"Listen. Mega Potions and MP Pots have their effect stabilized and improved by magic power. If you don't do that, they will turn the same as normal Potions. That's why, you need to pour magic power into either herbs or into the potion itself."

Pour magic power, meaning, raising their effect by consuming MP?

While there certainly were cases where I used MP during mixing, but it was during making items through the mixing skill.

So manual mixing did not consume MP, but it seemed like MP will be consumed when making potions from now on. However, I did not know the method to do that.

"Is pouring of magic power something like the **【Enchant】** Sense's skill?"

"It's different from that. Enchant is, y'know, putting in something with magic power already given directionality. I meant pouring pure magic power into the goods in order to bring out their original qualities. We call that——**【MP Bestowal】**."

"But, how do you do that?"

Even as I stared at my own palm, there was no indication that I could do the **【MP Bestowal】** Obaba was talking about.

"This is why I'm teaching you that. C'mon, bring me what's in that cabinet over there."

Made by Obaba to do everything, I opened the cabinet and inside, found a heavy hexagonal pedestal.

As I held the pedestal in both arms and carried it on top of the bench, Obaba put a Potion in the centre of the pedestal.

"This is the 【Pedestal of MP Bestowal】 for making you learn 【MP Bestowal】. Now, put your hand in here."

"Is it okay like this?"

When I pushed my right hand against the dent in the pedestal, I felt like something was passing through there and at the same time, I could confirm over the menu that my MP was decreasing.

Matching that, the engravings on the hexagonal pedestal were filled with light and as it drew geometrical patterns, light gathered in the centre and then inside the potion.

"That'll be enough."

As Obaba told me to, I took my hand away from the pedestal. The light filling the patterns was gradually absorbed by the potion and a brilliantly sparkling potion was completed.

Potion 【Consumable】

Recovery 【HP+33%】

The ordinary potion improved by magic power has had the recovery amount increased.

However, the recovery amount was merely 10% higher than that of a default Potion, so it didn't feel too special to me.

If it was like this, then potions I made manually had higher amount recovered.

"Does recovered amount go up by only this much? Won't it increase further if I pour more MP?"

"What stupid things are you saying?! You want an explosion here?!"

"Uwahh..."

I was yelled at by Obaba. Certainly, it might explode if too much MP is poured. After getting angry, Obaba cleared her throat and continued her explanation.

"Well, with this you can use 【MP Bestowal】 through the 【Pedestal of MP Bestowal】."

As if responding to her words, the menu had displayed an announcement of a new skill's acquisition.

——**EX-Skill 【MP Bestowal】 has been acquired.**

"Ohh, so 【MP Bestowal】 is an EX-Skill. Which means it might be useful for other types of crafting as well. For example, putting magic power into materials with 【MP Bestowal】 before crafting accessories——"My shop is a pharmacy! As long as I live, I won't let a successor candidate do such things!"——Yes ma'am."

Here I thought I came up with something nice, but I got scolded by Obaba again. And before I realized, I have been made into a candidate for a successor.

"Well, there are methods of achieving the same effect as using 【MP Bestowal】, like soaking materials in something filled with magic power to permeate, or doing specific rituals. There is a lot of it."

This 【Pedestal of MP Bestowal】 sucks in the magic power of the user as well as magic power from the air, and is a ceremonial tool to mix them together. After saying so, Obaba had me clean up the 【Pedestal of MP Bestowal】.

With this, the preparations for making potion named on the paper sheet was complete.

I reconfigured equipped Senses and once again, started learning from Obaba on how to make Mega Potions.

Possessed SP45

**【Magic Bow Lv6】【Sky Eyes Lv14】【See-Through Lv24】【Swiftess Lv20】
【Sorcery Lv18】【Enchant Arts Lv41】【Taming Lv21】【Earth Element Talent
Lv29】【Dosing Master Lv3】【Crafter's Knowledge Lv3】**

Unequipped:

**【Bow Lv50】【Longbow Lv30】【Alchemy Lv44】【Synthesis Lv44】【Engraving
Lv25】【Cook Lv15】【Swimming Lv15】【Linguistics Lv24】【Climbing Lv21】
【Bodily Resistance Lv5】【Spiritual Resistance Lv4】【Physical Attack Increase
Lv7】【Pre-Emptive Knowledge Lv8】【Vital Points Knowledge Lv8】**

"To craft Mega Potions you first need to boil Mystic Medicinal Grass in water or Water of Life, then complete by using **【MP Bestowal】**."

Using a mortar I ground the Mystic Medicinal Grass I was passed, added ordinary distilled water and heated it up in a small pot.

Then, apparently the range of temperatures within which the ingredient could have the healing components extracted was narrower than usual, as it started bubbling furiously upon exceeding the temperature and has immediately turned vivid green and cloudy.

At that point I hurriedly took away the pot from the fire, removed the residual scum of the herb from the pot and waited the heat and colour to calm down.

Afterwards, I poured the completed liquid into a potion bottle and confirmed its stats.

High Potion 【Consumable】

Recovery 【HP+40%】

It had an effect compared with that of a deteriorated, ordinary High Potion. At this stage, it wasn't a Mega Potion yet.

Holding expectations on whether will it change into a Mega Potion from here on, I cast the EX-Skill.

"——【MP Bestowal】"

Hovering my hand over the High Potion made with Mystic Medicinal Grass, I poured MP into it.

Along with my MP decreasing at a steady rate, the High Potion started to shine like the potion that was placed on the 【Pedestal of MP Bestowal】 before.

Not knowing how much should I pour, unable to judge it on my first time I checked my MP as I paid attention to the way the bottle shined.

"It's about time! Stop!"

As told to by Obaba, I stopped pouring MP into the potion. I guess I poured roughly about 5% of my MP into the potion. Apparently any more than that and it would explode.

And the High Potion which had the 【MP Bestowal】 performed on it had changed colour from a muddy one into a thinner one, and its stats changed greatly as well.

Mega Potion 【Consumable】

Recovery 【HP+60%】

"So the amount recovered changed by that much when 【MP Bestowal】 is used."

"Stop being silly! This is nothing but a low-quality product. It still hasn't reached the level of a product you can put out, so hurry and make more!"

With that said, the light-coloured Mega Potion was robbed away from me and materials for the remaining 14 Mega Potions have been prepared.

"Well, as long as I know the procedure, I can fine-tune the rest."

Getting the temperature right was difficult as compared to using Medicinal Spirit Grass, but if I cleared that part I could finish the rest fairly easily. Afterwards I immediately completed Mega Potions whose effect exceeded the first one and was able to complete the quest.

However, it felt that to make even higher quality potion it was necessary to improve the procedure. I wanted to hurry back to 【Atelier】 and do a mixing research on it, but—— "It's not like you can make Mega Potions without Mystic Medicinal Grass anyway. Also, look, there's more requests remaining."

Recalling the very basic fact that I can't make items without any materials, I calmly started preparing to do 【MP Pot】 mixing.

First using higher version of Magical Spirit Grass, the Soul Grass to make the potion, I completed it with 【MP Bestowal】.

MP Pot 【Consumable】

Recovery 【MP+50%】

I have fulfilled the number of deliveries for this potion as well, but it also seemed like there was room for improvement.

Although I wanted to return to 【Atelier】 and study various mixing procedures and differences in the state of materials, as well as blending ratios...

"Without Mystic Medicinal Grass and Soul Grass I can't make any Mega Potions or MP Pots, huh."

As a test I tried using potions made with two lower level materials – Medicinal Spirit Grass and Magical Spirit Grass and infused them with 【MP Bestowal】, but they did not turn into Mega Potion or MP Potion, only had their recovery amount increased.

As expected, they couldn't be made with substitute material.

"Hi hi hi, you are a candidate for my successor. I wouldn't mind sharing materials with you as a special case."

"Really?!"

"Yes, however, each of Mystic Medicinal Grass and Soul Grass for 50kG."

"Wha?!! That's way too expensive!!"

The lower level herbs Medicinal Spirit Grass and Magical Spirit Grass both were sold at 500G each, the price went way too high.

"Soo? What will you do? Give up?"

"Ughhhnn... five each, please."

"Hi hi hi, thanks for you patronage. Well then, I'm looking forward to when you buy the 【Intermediate Pharmacist's Tech Book】."

"Aahh! I forgot I need to buy that as well!"

After purchasing Mystic Medicinal Grass and Soul Grass for 500kG I had on hand, reminded by Obaba the pharmacist of the further cost to make new potions, I groaned while holding my head in my arms.



A few days later, together with Kyouko-san the NPC we went into the field behind the store.

"All right, now we just plant this and can take some rest. It's a herb-type seed, so it should grow normally, right?"

"I think so. You have asked the farmer about it, didn't you?"

Hearing her words, I nodded with a bitter smile.

Whenever I had newly acquired seeds or seedlings, I always consulted with the Farmer NPC on how to raise it.

As a result, on 【Atelier】's field other than herbs, there was the Wisteria Peach Tree, a Shiyu young tree, Double Camelia's young tree, even a Vitality Tree. On all of them there were fruits.

And now that the cultivation of some medicinal herbs has been slowed down by the 【Cold Damage】, I used that part of the field for cultivation of Mystic Medicinal Grass and Soul Grass.

The way to obtain the seeds for the two types of herbs, was to use 【Alchemy】

Sense's 【Lower Matter Conversion】 on the herbs themselves to turn them back to seeds.

By sowing those seeds on the field, increasing the number through cultivation and converting the harvested herbs with 【Lower Matter Conversion】 back into seeds, I prepared my field as much as possible for stable acquisition of Mega Potions and MP Pots.

"Well, in a week at the earliest, I guess?"

"Indeed. If something comes up I will report it right away."

With that said, Kyouko-san and I have poured water on the seeds we have sown.

Since the field wasn't that spacious, the work was done quickly. When the two of us returned to 【Atelier】, an acquainted player was turned with his back towards us and was looking at the product samples.

"Taku, so you came."

"Yeah, it looked like you went to the field so I've been waiting."

Realizing I'm back when I spoke, Taku turned around and greeted me.

"You're alone today, you need something?"

"No, well, you could say there is something I want from you. Actually, I came to take a look at Ryui."

Taku tilted his head as he found it hard to say, and then spoke of the reason he came to 【Atelier】.

"I heard from Myu-chan. She said that your tamed Unicorn has turned adult. Also, my other acquaintances said that they've seen it in the town."

"Ahh, back then."

Most likely the talk of back when we were dashing through the town has spread, I thought.

Is that even a reason to come to look? I thought, but in contrast to my thinking, Taku's expression grew stern making me tense up as well.

"How many people have properly seen Ryui's adult form?"

"I don't even know, so don't ask me..."

The only ones I actually showed Ryui's adult form were Cloude, for the sake of making measurements for Ryui's equipment and Lyly who was there as well.

When Myu and Magi-san came I didn't want to force Ryui so I refused.

"Honestly speaking, you might be flocked by onlookers who will come to the store just to see it."

"Eh, no way that's..."

I thought it was a joke, but seeing Taku made a worried expression, it must have been true.

"...Seriously?"

"It's a rare tamed mob you have made your comrade during an event. That's enough to draw attention, but now he's turned adult. There's high possibility many players will come to confirm that uncertain information."

There is a possibility of other problems coming up as well, Taku said. Troublesome stuff coming up again, I thought and looked at the ceiling resigned.

"And so, lots of acquaintances have been worried whether there are lots of people surging in here."

"So that's why you came alone..."

Gantz really seemed to want to come as well, but I left him. Taku added making me smile wryly. At the same time I thought of the possibility that unknown players will surge into 【Atelier】.

While a bustling atmosphere wasn't bad, but since I loved calm more, I might get a little depressed.

"Which means that if I don't properly show Ryui off somewhere in public, it'll turn noisy?"

That's when my 【See-Through】 Sense reacted and I turned towards 【Atelier】's entrance, finding a player looking inside the store.

Ryui was currently using illusion to hide himself from such players, I thought

and stared at the player quietly. As a result, the player left from the front 【Atelier】 while acting suspiciously.

"Sigh, I get it. With that said, how do I even do the whole unveiling?"

"Let's see. First up you should show him off to acquaintances. Won't it be fine if you show yourself riding Ryui around a plain for starters? Meanwhile have people take screenshots and vids to share with other players."

Although the number of players who come just to see Ryui would decrease, it would be embarrassing to have a video of myself taken.

"But we can't do that at least until Cloude finishes the equipment I requested for Ryui."

I tried to make up an excuse to delay Ryui's unveiling, but that's when I received a message.

The sender was Cloude and the content of the message was——

『"——Ryui's and Ricœur's equipment is complete, I want to talk about passing it onto you."』

After looking at the message displayed in the menu, I commented shortly.

"Cloude's making things way too fast."

What's with this message, as if he's waiting for this moment. By receiving this message, I have been made unable to delay showing Ryui off.

"Resolve yourself, Yun. And if Magi-san's Ricœur has also turned adult, why not show them off together? Tomorrow's a holiday, too."

"Ughh, fine."

At least I will have Magi-san with me, I agreed with him while sighing.

Also, if Magi-san unveils Ricœur the attention will be dispersed and there will be less noise by that amount, I considered reasonably.

"I'll decide on the time for unveiling, call Myu-chan, Sei-san and Mikadzuchi with others."

"I'll leave it to you, Taku. Once everything quietens down, I'll close myself in the workshop to research the new recipes——"We can't consult on the

unveiling without the person in question, so wait in here."——Geez, what a pain."

I was told by Taku to remain on standby in 【Atelier】.

Actually I wanted to study the new recipes for potions I learned so far, but instead I decided to use the 【MP Bestowal】 on potions in stock during the time I have been made wait.

While consuming MP with 【MP Bestowal】 I thought that I shouldn't have come back to the store from the field and instead went to either do event's quests or receive new delivery-type quest from Obaba to learn new recipes, and sighed.

Then, once I ran out of MP and started waiting for natural recovery to catch up I suddenly thought up of something.

What is Taku going to exchange his quest event's chips?

I spoke a question to Taku, who was showing his back to me and messaging with acquaintances.

"Hey, Taku. What items are you planning to exchange Quest Chips for?"

"Why the sudden question?"

"Asking for the sake of a reference."

For the time being I was aiming to get 50 chips, but since I haven't decided what item to get I thought of taking others as a reference.

"Hmm. If possible I would like to get over 135 chips. By the way, I have 52 so far."

"You're aiming way too high. By the way, what do you want?"

"By exchanging 100 chips I want 【Magic Remodelled Weapon's Base】, 【Three Random Boxes】 for 25 chips and use remaining 10 for 【Instant House】."

"【Instant House】?"

Hearing names of an item I'm not familiar and when I didn't see it among items for 10 chips, Taku explained in detail.

"【Instant House】 is an item you can get by exchanging 50 chips, if each of us

in the party pitches in 10 chips we'll be able to get it."

Hearing his words I once again examined the field for items costing 50 chips, there certainly was an item called 【Instant House】.

"It's finally about time and we want a building to use as a base, but it will take time and costs to prepare one, right? That's why we've been thinking of buying cheap piece of land in the South part of the First Town and build an 【Instant House】 in there."

【Instant House】 seemed to be an item allowing the user to easily build a one-story house. Although it was a simple building compared to guild houses and properties available for purchase in the town, you could decide the design by yourself to some extent and apparently they could be changed to several types.

In the menu, there was a built-in trial of 【Instant House】's design tool, although the height and width were restricted, it allowed to design the house freely.

"This is interesting. There are dirt floor, flooring and tatami mats to use."

"Yeah. Kei and I just want a place for items that get in the way, but Minute and Mami-san are thinking over a fancy design for it."

As I listened to Taku's words, hee so there are such building materials, I thought and when played with 【Instant House】's design for a while I saw a certain building material standing out.

It was glass panels.

Normally glass was used for windows in the buildings, but I thought it could be used in this case.

"Maybe I should do my best and get 【Instant House】 as well."

"...Huhh? You've got 【Atelier】 as your base, why would you want a new house?"

"No, I meant to make a house completely out of glass and grow plants inside. Like a greenhouse, you know?"

The implementation of 【Cold Damage】 made part of my herb cultivation decrease in speed, perhaps the problem could be resolved with this item? I

thought, but Takeru's stare expressed astonishment.

"There are better items you can get for 50 chips. Either go for those or aim for 100 chips to exchange. I don't mind helping you out a little to collect quest chips."

Certainly, I could exchange 100 chips for 【Ownership of a Personal Field】 which would be better, but managing it felt difficult so I preferred something smaller.

That's why I'm so troubled, I told Taku. As a result he made a grimace.

"When you talk about making new buildings or owning a private field I'm starting to worry you're playing a game all by yourself in your miniature garden. Well, how do I say this, uhh... for now aim for 【Instant House】 and do your best, though you might change your mind half-way."

"Hm? I don't know why am I being encouraged now, but I'll try."

Although I ended up wondering what did he mean as Taku watched me with a warm look in his eyes, I ended up using this conversation as a reference for picking an item to exchange chips for.

For now I will try aiming to get 50 chips' 【Instant House】.

A little later, as a result of Taku calling various acquaintances it was decided that Ryui's unveiling will take place the next day.

As always, he was quick to do this kind of work.

Afterwards, Taku said he has nothing to do, so we took some simple subjugation-type and mob drop delivery quests together the two of us. As a result the number of my Quest Chips increased to 32.

It was because they received such time-efficient quests with small numbers of people that fighters like Taku and Myu gather more Quest Chips, I thought vaguely.



"Oneechan, hurry!"

"Don't rush me so much. There's still time... heck, don't call me 'oneechan'."

"But I want to see adult Ryui as soon as possible!"

I was forced out of the bed by Myu in the morning and immediately after having breakfast, logged in to OSO.

And currently, Myu and I took Ryui and Zakuro, then headed to the plain on the West outside of the town.

In the Western plain often used for PvP training there were acquainted players already gathered, waiting to see my partner Ryui and Magi-san's Ricœur in their adult form.

"Heeey, I brought Oneechan!"

Ahead of where Myu waved her hand to, were Taku, Sei-nee as well as Lucato and other of Myu's party members, Taku's party members, and Mikadzuchi's guild's 【Eight Million Gods】 members. They were all exchanging information on the event amongst each other.

"Luka-chan, good morning!"

Seeing off Myu who rushed to where Lucato and others were, I approached Taku.

"Taku, is this everyone?"

"Yes, actually. At this stage I wouldn't call anyone you don't know."

When told so I took a look around, I noticed that everyone was carefully selected which made me relieved.

"Heey! Are preparations for taking a vid of Yun-chan's gallant figure complete?"

"All perfect! Everything prepared for screenshots!"

"We have a perfect battle formation, we won't miss any lovely moment!"

...Should I really be relieved? It was supposed to be mine and Magi-san's unveiling, but from among 【Eight Million Gods】 guild members I heard very disturbing remarks hinting a different goal from original, so I concentrated on conversation with Taku not to be conscious of it.

"By the way, isn't Magi-san here? She's unveiling Ricœur, right?"

I looked for the other protagonists of this event, Magi-san and Ricœur but unable to find them anywhere, I asked Taku.

"Ohh, Magi-san is..."

When Taku was about to explain, something silver has slipped into edge of my vision.

What was that? As I looked at it while tilting my head, a silver beast ran straight towards where we were. Then, as it approached, it seemed like it was even larger than adult Ryui and had splendid physique.

The silver beast in question ran with light movements unsuitable to its size and weight, moving straight towards me and has stopped in front of me.

—*Agh, I'll be eaten.*

My legs froze as I thought so, but the silver beast only rubbed its neck against me.

Relieved that I wasn't eaten and nearly collapsing due to being pushed strongly against by the huge neck I was supported by Taku from behind. I looked up at the silver beast again and noticed familiar features.



"...Ricœur?"

I stroked the bluish-silver fur, it was the same as Magi-san's Ricœur's.

"C'mon, Ricœur! Don't surprise Yun-kun!"

Magi-san's voice sounded from above Ricœur's huge body. Then, she jumped off from on top of him and moved in front.

"Yun-kun, are you all right?"

"Y-yes... still, Ricœur sure has gotten big."

He was so small and cute and now he's turned so splendid... thinking so, I continued to stroke his fur.

"Ahh, no fair Oneechan, me too! I want to fluffle that silvery fur too!"

Myu embraced Ricœur's at full power, but even with her amount of power his body didn't even flinch, and she started rubbing her cheek against him.

Ricœur who was acting very familiar with humans had rubbed Myu back in the same way, but due to the difference in physique she was nearly pushed down and had to brace herself to endure.

While watching her do that from the side, I listened to what Magi-san was saying.

"I went ahead to check how comfortable the saddle made by Cloude is."

Saying so, she pointed at the saddle on Ricœur's back. She checked on the saddle, collar and reins made of white leather to match the bluish-silver fur.

"Ricœur, how was it? Did it hurt anywhere?"

Magi-san stroked the collar, reins, inspected the saddle and Ricœur himself to investigate, but nothing indicated that he was uncomfortable.

That's when Cloude had approached with Socks on his shoulder.

"How is it, Magi? The riding comfort in a saddle."

"Hmm. Well. Ricœur running is very powerful and turns around very sharply, so we can ride inside places like forest and woods without any problems, but we can't get much speed. Of course, as long as its in a place without any

obstacles and in straight line, we can move just like we had just now."

After listening to Magi-san's analysis, Cloude nodded.

"Well then, next is Yun's turn. This is Ryui's equipment."

Cloude said and passed Ryui's equipment onto me.

"Thanks, Cloude. Well then, let's do it Ryui. ——【Adult Form】"

I used the EX-Skill 【Adult Form】 to return Ryui back to adult state.

Ryui who was walking next to me had turned into a splendid unicorn in an instant, causing a commotion in the surroundings.

Normally, Myu would have charged right at him but just this once she read the mood and only observed from the side.

I set-up Ryui's equipment I have received from Cloude.

"Ryui. Is there anywhere that hurts or feels tight?"

I placed the saddle, made sure to install the reins on his Ryui's head and that they aren't in the way. With just that he already seemed to look the part.

Then to make sure Ryui can do his best, I passed Zakuro who was in my hood to Magi-san.

"Well then, show everyone what Ryui can do."

"So you say, but what do I even do?"

Is what I was told by Taku, but I didn't know what was I supposed to do. While I was agonizing over it, Ryui had lowered himself on his knees and sat down in front of me. Get on, is what it must mean.

I got on Ryui just as urged to.

Before, I was in a hurry and rode directly on Ryui's bare back, but this time there was saddle, stirrup, as well as reins which gave me a huge difference in stability and sense of security. I grew nervous in expectations for the moment we start running.

Ryui stood up with me on his back and started to slowly walk in front of everyone.

At first speed had increased to a level where I could feel a gentle wind, but eventually I started moving fast like wind itself which was very pleasant.

I might have been experiencing one of the reasons why people were so fascinated with horses.

"Actually I expected to see some special abilities, but seeing Yun have so much fun I can't say anything."

"It would be better to let Yun-chan ride around for a while first, let's watch over them for now."

In the distance Taku and Sei-nee were talking about something, but wind blowing into my ear had obscured the content of their conversation. Also, although I did notice Myu look very enviously in my direction, I ignored it as we further increased out speed.

"Okay, Ryui. Isn't it about time to show your power?"

When I muttered while stroking Ryui's neck who was running at high speed, a certain phenomenon had happened as my MP was suddenly consumed.

When we were running through the town I was completely focused on trying to grasp the situation and did not confirm anything, but now I could see Ryui's body and my limbs slightly transparent. However, that was just me, as others in the surroundings have lost us from their sight and were looking around to find us.

Feeling a bit mischievous I lowered Ryui's speed and turned to behind the onlookers', then cancelled invisibility.

"Hey, where are you looking?"

"?! Yun! Where did you disappear to?!"

"Disappeared? We've been riding all this time. Well, Myu knows what I'm saying, right?"

"I didn't forget that failure. It's Ryui's 【Illusion】."

Illusion on the level Myu and others could not see through—transparency. When Ryui was a young beast, Myu has once tried clinging onto him and failed, memorizing it very well.

And so, Ryui's abilities I have confirmed so far were water and purification magics, as well as illusion which could be used on himself and the rider at the same time—no, more like transparency that could be used for both concealment and avoidance at the same time.

"So, this is about it? It feels like an improved version of young beast Ryui."

"Ryui's the best! Come to me!"

When I got down from Ryui, as if to take my place Myu tried embracing Ryui's neck, but he reflexively hid himself with transparency.

Then, as soon as it was released Myu jumped at him again so this time he ran away towards the plain at full speed with her chasing after.

"Myu, don't trouble Ryui too much!"

"Yup! Okaay!"

Even while she said that, she carefully closed the distance onto Ryui. However, on his guard, Ryui opened distance from heavily-breathing Myu.

The moment Myu took a step, Ryui reflexively turned with his back to her and started running. Despite that, Myu continued to chase after.

Like that, the two ran far away. They probably won't come back for a while, I thought and decided to watch over them.

That's when Taku and Mikadzuchi had approached me.

"I see. Can I ask you a few questions, Yun?"

"What is it? As long as I can answer."

When I responded to Taku, he started asking questions as a representative.

"Can you attack with bow while riding? Also, how long can you continue maintaining invisibility?"

"I'm not certain yet. If I get used to using the bow I might be able to, but I need to practice... as for invisibility, it might be hard to maintain it for long time. It keeps consuming my MP."

"Then, Ryui's own battle strength?"

"He charged through a group of skeletons and trampled over them."

"Last question. Can you attack from invisibility?"

"Not sure. That's something we need to check. ——Ryui!"

Ryui who was chased by Myu had used transparency and came back to us while hidden from her.

"Next time I will definitely ride on you!"

I smiled wryly hearing Myu yell from a distance.

On the other hand, Ryui seemed a little displeased by the fact I did not stop Myu.

Stroking his body, I asked.

"Ryui, would let me on you again?"

In response to my words Ryui let out a sigh as if saying "can't be helped" and let me on again.

"So, what targets are you going to aim at, Missy?"

Mikadzuchi asked me, but before I could respond with "don't call me missy", Sei-nee made a suggestion.

"We will prepare those. Myu-chan, can you prepare some decoys?"

"Of course! I can! ——《Summon – Light Servant》!"

"And me, too——《Summon – Aqua Servant》!"

The magic Myu and Sei-nee chanted had created magic circles in front of us, from which light and water mobs appeared.

What Myu summoned was a mob that looked like a octahedron crystal, and Sei-nee summoned a snake mob made of water. Both of them were fairly small mobs.

"What's that?! It looked a little cool!"

"Fu-fun! These are light and water magic's summon skills. Amazing, right?!"

"With that said, there's a limit on the number you can summon and their stats are about half as high as those of a normal player. They are good for acting as

decoys, tanks and attacking."

"Sei-oneechan, there is no need to reveal everything right after we show off so coolly. ——Oh well. Now, mobs of mine, escape at random, reveal Yun-oneechan's and Ryui's powers!"

Myu and Sei-nee added two summoned mobs each and had them run around the Western plain.

The octahedron crystal floating slightly above the ground and the water snake moved at quite high speed, escaping in all directions.

"Well, let's begin. Ryui!"

I sat down on Ryui's back and held the reins. With that said, rather than controlling Ryui it was more like Ryui was moving according to my will.

Holding the bow on Ryui's shaking back I strongly stepped on the stirrups and stabilized my lower body by clamping the saddle with my thighs.

I aimed at one escaping water snake from an unfamiliar position and shot an arrow, but my aim was off and the arrow pierced the ground.

"——Ahh, close!"

I heard Myu's voice from behind.

At the same time, the water snake the arrow has missed had counter-attacked with a barrage of small water bullets.

"——Ryui!"

Responding to my voice, Ryui made our bodies transparent and the water snake's water attacks have passed through us. Like that we confirmed that Ryui's illusions were effective at neutralizing decoys' attacks. I targeted the decoys the moment they lost the sight of me and stopped moving and drew the bow again.

This time the arrow seemed to have been sucked into the centre of the light crystal and destroyed it. However, at the moment of attack the transparency was forcibly released. Ryui had avoided an attack from another decoy by running.

It was impossible to immediately turn transparent again, so we fought back against the decoys while running around.

We were able to confirm that Ryui's transparency had a delay time just like player skills.

Also, when I used an MP Potion to restore the consumed MP while under effect of transparency, it had been lifted again.

Which meant that by either attacking or using items Ryui's transparency was forcibly cancelled.

"Now, it's about time to finish this! 《Enchant》—Attack, Intelligence!"

I defeated one summoned mob, but there were still two light crystals and three water snakes remaining.

After putting an enchant on myself I selected a certain bow-type Art to use from on top of Ryui's back and released it at the summoned mobs.

"—《Magic Bow Skill – Phantom Arrow》!"

The arrow pulling a red tail behind it flew straight at the water snake, on its way the red tail extending from it had branched into four arrows and all five magic arrows have aimed for a different summoned mob.

The magic arrow whose power was increased by a double enchantment raising my stats had pierced Myu's and Sei-nee's summoned mobs one after another.

When all the summoned mobs turned into light particles I lowered my bow and gripping Ryui's reins with my left hand I slowed down.

"I guess that's about it? Cheers for good work, Ryui."

I stroked Ryui's mane with my open hand as we returned to our acquaintances who were observing combat.

I guess with this Ryui's unveiling was over.

"Good work there, Yun-kun. Here's your Zakuro, back to you."

"Thank you very much, Magi-san."

Zakuro was calmly sitting in Magi-san's arms, but as soon as I took him back

he slipped into his place inside my hood.

"He behaved very well. It seemed like he used to have distrust of humans, is this because we're acquainted? I guess he opened his heart to me?"

"Indeed, that might be so."

While Magi-san and I talked, Ryui had used 【Young Beast Form】 EX-Skill on his own and returned to his young beast form.

Upon doing that, the saddle he was equipped with had disappeared and he looked like usual, without anything on him.

"Huh? Ryui's equipment is..."

"Don't worry. It didn't disappear. When he turns adult it will automatically be equipped again."

Cloude had appeared from behind Magi-san's back and explained, I called in Ryui and once again used the 【Adult Form】 EX-Skill.

"—【Adult Form】! Ohhh! It really was equipped!"

Although I felt a little impressed, Ryui who was turned adult again right after he returned into young beast had turned into a young beast again, then started poking me lightly.

"Ahahaha, sorry, Ryui. Sorry, I said."

When I stroked his neck to calm him down, Ryui sighed loudly, making me smile bitterly.

Meanwhile, while I talked with Magi-san and Cloude, it appeared that Taku, Mikadzuchi and the others were talking about something as they stared our way.

"Right now Yun's Senses directionality is completely disjointed and it's all chaos, but the way she didn't turn half-assed and was able to synergize them well is amazing."

"Agreed. If Missy's Sense build, equipment and additional effects are well-adjusted, there's a possibility she'll turn into one of top players. Right now everything is unbalanced which is why she can't show her true strength."

I approached Taku and Mikadzuchi who were talking with serious look on their faces, then asked.

"How were our movements?"

"Oh, it was amazing."

Although it was plain, but hearing that answer from Mikadzuchi made me a little happy, and Ryui boastful.

"That's right, Ryui's amazing! He feels where I want to go and moves, and I have 【Taming】 Sense's assist so there's no problem riding."

"Woah Missy, you're so dazzling. It seems we're being purified by you."

"Well, this playstyle might be working because the one that's using it is Yun, who prioritizes his hobbies over efficiency."

Holding his fingers between his eyebrows Mikadzuchi looked up at the sky, Taku smiled wryly.

I tilted my head wondering what did they mean, but they just went "it's nothing".

And—

"Hey, how about you come to my place?"

"Fuahh?!"

Mikadzuchi moved her face close to mine, making me let out a strange squeal.

Her face was very close, and despite being a woman, she spoke really manly lines.

Seeing her abrupt behaviour, Myu wedged herself between us.

"Wait right there! Any confessions of love towards Oneechan are strictly forbidden!"

"C-confessions of love?!"

"Pfft-kukuku..."

While I raised high-pitched voice, Taku started to laugh happily from his

throat. Other acquaintances also started staring here, wondering what's going on.

That was already enough to make me feel like my face was on fire from embarrassment, but Mikadzuchi simply denied what Myu said, puzzled.

"Ahh, that's not it y'know. I was asking Yun-missy comes to our place to bring out her characteristics in full."

"Ohh, so that was it. However, I'm not giving Yun-oneechan away!"

Despite understanding what Mikadzuchi meant, Myu still loudly denied. This time I turned red from embarrassment for a different reason.

"So you want to fight with Missy at stake, huh. Sounds nice, now, let's go at it."

Suddenly Myu and Mikadzuchi started duelling.

Don't start fighting with me as a prize while I'm not there, I thought as I left the two to go beside Taku to ask for an objective evaluation of Ryui and me.

"Well, seeing your attacks, it makes me want you to join some adventuring party. I feel it's a waste to leave you as a crafter."

"Why a waste?"

"Ryui's high level concealment capability and means of moving at high speed by riding him, as well as your distance attacks with 【Bow】 type Senses. Although you have an established playstyle, your attack power is notwithstanding. That's why I understand why would Mikadzuchi want to try correcting that."

Which meant that Ryui's abilities were high and wonderful, but I was wasting those characteristics, huh.

"Sorry Ryui, your rider is a half-assed archer. Apparently I am unable to fully demonstrate your abilities."

I was depressed by the fact pointed out by Taku, but Ryui rubbed his neck against me as if to say "don't mind it".

"No, you've already turned much better than you used to be. It's just..."

Taku spoke to support me, but hesitated in the middle of the sentence.

"Just... what?"

"You are quite strong against weak enemies. If you fight skilfully you might overwhelm one in twenty... no, more like one in fifty, I guess?"

"Is that a praise? Or are you worrying about me? I'm having trouble how to take that..."

Hearing my words Sei-nee moved closer and lightly pat my shoulder. Don't mind it, she said with a bitter smile, then intruded on Myu's and Mikadzuchi's PvP, forcibly stopping them.

Suddenly intruding she instantly temporarily turned the two powerless, making the surroundings let out voices of admiration.

"C'mon Myu-chan, don't make so much noise. You too, Mikadzuchi."

"Yees. I'm sorry."

"Sorry, sorry. It seemed interesting, forgive me."

With duel interrupted, Mikadzuchi came asking me again.

"So, what will you do? How about leaving Missy to me?"

"I want to spend time laid back, so no."

She shrugged seeing me clearly refuse.

"That's a shame. Then, soon we are planning on holding a Christmas party in our 【Eight Million Gods】 guild, how about that?"

There'll be lots of acquaintances gathering, she said, so I thought about it for a moment and nodded.

"I don't mind coming for that. But this time, I'll bring some cakes I made in 【Atelier】, is that fine?"

I've had a lot of strawberry cakes and fruit roll cakes I made as practice before the winter quest event started. Mikadzuchi acknowledged my thinking of supplying those.

Afterwards, Magi-san's and Ricœur's unveiling was held. Ricœur had fangs

and claws reinforced with ice magic and displayed his beautiful figure on the plain covered with thin layer of snow.

There were many players raising voices of admiration for it, also admiring his powerful attacks they took videos and screenshots of it.

Let's download some of them later, I decided in secret.

Thereafter, the unveiling video has been posted and the amount of people coming to 【Atelier】 to see Ryui decreased. Only some time after I have learned that the video had become very popular among animal-lovers.

Chapter 2 - Bodyguard Quest and A Ball

The day after revealing my Ryui's and Magi-san's Ricoeur's adult forms, I went to Obaba's pharmacy and purchased the 【Intermediate Pharmacist's Tech Book】 after which I started to decipher it with 【Linguistics】 Sense.

I spent the whole day deciphering it, then headed to 【Atelier】's workshop in order to prepare materials. After that, I started preparing items for one of the delivery quest's from Obaba's pharmacy board - 【Delivery of Resistance-Granting Potions of Four Types (30 of each set)】.

"Um... If I'm not wrong, materials for 【Fascination Resistance Antidote】 were Antidote Grass, Discharm Grass, Herb, Distilled Water, Shiyu Fruit and——"

I decided to make 【Fascination Resistance Antidote】, 【Strife Prevention Drug】, 【Dusk Resistance Drug】 and 【Rage Sedating Drug】 for the four types. The 【Fascination Resistance Antidote】 I was preparing materials with a recipe in my hand, was decreasing or completely nullifying the effect of 【Charm】 and 【Poison】.

According to that recipe, in addition to necessary materials normally used for making antidotes for each bad status, a food item which was Shiyu Fruit, was required.

Shiyu Fruit could be collected in the forest North of the First Town, it was very similar to a plum.

When you eat it, in addition to recovering Satiety you also receive a weak, temporary resistance against 【Charm】 and 【Poison】.

Also, other similar fruits were 【Tou Fruit】 which granted Paralysis and Stun resistance, 【Cold Crimson Glory Vine】 which granted Confusion and Anger resistance, as well as 【Mountain Apple】 which granted resistance to Sleep and Curse.

"Since I'm done with deciphering the other recipes as well, I can start making them. But that'll decrease the number of fruit items I have in stock by quite a bit."

I often used fruits for making sweets and other food or even eaten them raw, so their consumption was quite fast.

If in addition to that, they are used as materials for potions, the remaining stock would be insufficient.

"Once the event ends I'll have to seriously go look for saplings of these fruit trees. But for now let's make 【Fascination Resistance Antidote】, though, how do I go about making it?"

For the time being, let's make it according to the recipe.

I added Antidote Grass, Discharm Grass and a Herb in the same amounts and mashed them in the mortar. Afterwards I added distilled water, poured everything into the pot and started to boil it.

Then, I had to pay attention to managing the temperature, but the overall procedure was the same as that for making an ordinary Antidote Potion. However, with the Antidote Grass and Discharm Grass were mixed, both effects should have cancelled each other.

In this case, when I looked at the liquid inside, it appeared as a low quality Antidote.

The Antidote Grass effect has been lowered because Discharm Grass was contained inside as well.

At that point, I added Shiyu Fruit's juice I squeezed out, then mixed well. But even with that done, the formed liquid still remained as Antidote.

"It feels a little strange. Let's try drinking some."

I put a finger inside the mixture, then licked it to check the taste.

"Hmm. I guess it tastes like a watered-down plum juice? Just a little bit sweet?"

It being a potion aside, it's tasty? I thought as I filled a potion bottle with the liquid and did the finishing touch.

"Fuhh——【MP Bestowal】!"

A pale light moved from my hand and onto the potion, and was sucked inside it.

The potion's colour changed, and the moment I saw it had divided into two colours, that of Antidote and Discharm Potion, they gradually mixed together to turn yellow. The finished potion's colour was yellowish-green, coloured similarly to Shiyu Fruit.

Fascination Resistance Antidote 【Consumable】

Resistance 【Poison 1, Charm 1 (25 Minutes)】

I managed to make the first resistance potion, but I felt like I could still improve it.

What about using finished potion for mixing?

I mixed complete Antidote and Discharm Potion in ratio one to one, then added Shiyu Fruit juice before mixing. Afterwards I used 【MP Bestowal】, but the result was a low-quality resistance potion.

Next, I used the herb item from recovery-type herbs, Medicinal Spirit Grass and Water of Life instead of distilled water.

In addition to that, I mixed it while changing temperature patterns and the timings of when I add materials. As a result of that, and of using higher level materials the effect had improved, but I also learned that the effect changed depending on material balance.

For example, when adding 1 Antidote Grass and 1 Discharm Grass——

Fascination Resistance Antidote 【Consumable】

Resistance 【Poison 1, Charm 2 (25 Minutes)】

——This was the result.

Also, the effect time increased and decreased depending on the temperature and how long the mixture was heated up, and affected the resistance in inversely proportional manner.

"Hmm. If I play around with it too much, it'll turn hard to use. Let's make them using the standard way while using higher level materials."

I decided so, and started crafting **【Fascination Resistance Antidotes】**.

And the potion resulting from that was——

Fascination Resistance Antidote **【Consumable】**

Resistance **【Poison 2, Charm 2 (35 Minutes)】**

Other than that, I also thought of playing around with **【Alchemy】** and **【Synthesis】** to see if I can make it with completely different materials, but for the time being I crafted 30 **【Fascination Resistance Antidotes】** of this quality.

Thirty of each of the three other potion types were made with the same procedure and completed when I applied **【MP Bestowal】** to all of them.

"Okay. With this I'll have 10 Quest Chips. What's left is to take Yellow Potions, Demon's Wonder Pills and Holy Mountain's Magic Water from the store's stock, 15 of each, for 13 Quest Chips in total."

Since I already had 32 Quest Chips, after delivering these I would have 45 of them, getting close to my goal of 50 in total.

"Still, even with all the quests I have remaining at Obaba's place, I'll barely reach fifty."

I cleaned up inside **【Atelier】** and headed towards Obaba's pharmacy in order to deliver the items.

As I left the store, the town's scenery seemed to have a much brighter atmosphere as compared to the first day of the event.

I couldn't clearly tell what was different, but the faces of NPCs behind the falling snow, seemed to appear happier.

The winter quest event's objective was to solve the problems plaguing the town.

Half of the event has already passed, the town's NPCs might have changed because players solved many problems.

As I thought so, I checked one of the quest boards installed around the town, looking for errand-type quests.

In that moment, an announcement from OSO Development Department has appeared on the quest board.

『Current completion rate of the event's quests——56%

The release of special mobs and their suppression quests will happen at the end of the event.

The abilities of the special mobs will depend on quest completion rate, the higher completion rate the lower stats and abilities will the mobs have.

When the special mob suppression is complete, an additional reward shall be distributed equally among all players.

Further details will be exposed at later date.

——OSO Development Department』

The content was concise and as I looked at it, the number for the quest completion rate had broken down to become 57%.

"The event advanced quite far. I need to do my best as well."

Since the amount of chips I was aiming for wasn't so high, I picked several errand-type quests which had a pretty bad reward efficiency and headed for the pharmacy.

When I stepped inside the dimly-lit store under the evening sky, tending to the store wasn't the owner Obaba, but a young female NPC.

"Welcome."

"E-eh? Did I mistake stores? Where's Obaba...?"

"Granny is in the workshop in the back. In the evening it's always me tending to the store."

After listening to the explanation of the pretty girl with round eyes, I nodded convinced. Still, this girl looked completely dissimilar from Obaba, who looked like a typical witch with her eagle nose.

While I stood there for a moment, stumped, Obaba walked from the workshop to the front with steady steps.

"What, you're here? What do you need today? Did you come to deliver items? Or maybe to buy materials?"

"A-ahh... I came to deliver items."

"I see. Then pull 'em out."

Relieved that Obaba was blunt as usual, I arranged the potions specified for delivery on top of the counter.

Obaba and I watched Obaba's granddaughter as she checked the potions on the counter.

"A good girl, isn't she? She's doing her best to take over after me. She's cute, thoughtful and hard working. And she's turning into a beauty like me."

"I can agree that she's cute and a hard worker, but... does she really resemble you?"

I said and compared Obaba with the girl.

"What's with that look on your face? Her hair and eyes have similar colour. And she looks just like me when I was young."

"Is she, now..."

Certainly, their hair and eye colours looked to be the same. If Obaba in her youth looked just like this girl, thinking that this girl would come to look the same as this eccentric old woman, it made me feel that time is really cruel.

"All right. There is no problem with their quality, I receive the delivery."

"You too are very talented and easy to teach, it's worth spending my time on."

"Then I will count on you to teach me new drug recipes next time."

I asked Obaba to teach me the new recipes I haven't tried myself yet and received the 13 Quest Chips of reward from her granddaughter. When I left the store it was already dark outside.

On the way back to 【Atelier】 I stumbled upon a strange sight.

A long line of players extended from an a single alley and continued all the way near the place the pharmacy was located at.

"What is this queue...?"

When I looked ahead to where was the queue leading, there, I saw a luxurious mansion.

In front of the mansion there was a brick wall and a steel gate where player parties have gathered in pretty rows.

On a first glance, there were at least fifty people here, and, gathering on the side were temporary parties.

In front of the queue stood an elderly male NPC wearing butler clothing, as well as a young butler who guided the parties into the mansion.

"This must be... some kind of quest."

I approached the players who were busy making temporary parties and listened to what the quest is about.

"We're looking for temporary party members to do the【Party Infiltration & Escort】 quest, which can't be found on the quest board! It's a bodyguarding quest. To complete the quest we need to protect the VIP from enemy NPCs who make assault on the party. There is an equipment restriction during the infiltration and armour is forcibly changed into party clothing with low defence power, moreover, only one weapon can be used. It's a quest with harsh restrictions."

Other than that, this quest was a starting point of a chain quest, but the quests ahead still were not completed by anyone.

"And finally, the reward for this quest is 100kG and 5 Quest Chips for each participant! Anyone who would like to join our party, please come over here!"

After listening to the entire explanation by one of the recruiters, "oh, there are quests like that, too", I thought as I looked towards the mansion again.

A slight glow and the sound of bright classical music performance have leaked out from the mansion, surrounded by a fence.

Based on the explanation earlier, it was impossible to complete this quest alone. Since I never did anything like guarding a VIP before, I probably wouldn't be of any use in a temporary party.

In any case, that quest has nothing to do with me, I thought and was about to leave this place——

"Oh! It's 【Nanny】!"

"Hm?"

Hearing a nickname I disliked I furrowed my eyebrows and turned around, there, I found a male player approaching me with a smile. I did not know him, but he must have known me.

Since I stopped moving, the distance between us was closed right away.

"Are you alone now? Then, how about making a party with me? You were listening to the quest explanation really intently, so I bet you're interested?"

"No... it was out of pure interest, that's all——"

I tried to refuse the player who was quite forcible in recruitment, but yet another player has approached us.

"Wait! You're a mage, aren't you?! Your equipment doesn't match well with 【Nanny】's. That's why I'll..."

"No, I'm... well..." "We won't let such a cute girl enter your filthy party!"——
Listen to me..."

Two female players had intruded in the middle of solicitation.

In no time, four players have gathered around me and started bickering, which resulted in further attention from the surroundings.

The two women and two men in front of me didn't have such bad combination of equipment, so I felt like saying they should party up together

instead.

However, it seemed like the four's objective was me and the look in their eyes made me draw backwards.

At that moment, I was coincidentally saved.



"Whoops, sorry guys. Yun was waiting to meet up with us."

A familiar voice had sounded from behind me and a hand was placed on my shoulder.

I turned my head and there, I saw my childhood friend, Taku.

Taku, your face is too close. And don't speak into my ear!

While I complained in my mind, I nodded playing along with what he said in order to get out of here.

"Well then, I'll be taking Yun with me."

Showing the four players a slightly crooked smile, Taku took my hand and pulled me away.

Once we moved to a place slight distance away, we found Taku's party members waiting for us.

Gantz, one of the rare OSO players who fight without weapons, Kei who was clad in rugged armour and held a shield, Minute who wore cleric-like clothing, and a young witch Mami-san, wearing round glasses and a witch hat. All four were gathered there.

"Sorry to make you wait, Gantz. Yun got involved in trouble again."

"So you safely got Yun-chan out of there, huh."

"Don't make it sound like I'm some kind of troublemaker. Geez..."

I heaved a tired sigh as I protested.

"Anyway, why are you guys here?"

"Well, that's because we came to undertake this evening-limited quest. The

reward is quite good and it's a chain quest's starting point."

I see... I thought convinced and tried to go back, but Taku stood in my way, making it hard to for me to leave.

"All right then, it's about time for me to go..."

"Look around us first."

I took a quick look at the surroundings and saw that there's still plenty of players watching us.

"What's going on?"

"Obviously, it's because you're cute, Yun-chan. Everyone's gaze just concentrate on you!"

"Yes yes. You can ignore what this dumbass Gantz says."

As she said so, Minute ground the tip of her mace into Gantz' toes, making him scream in pain.

Kei sighed at the sight and said "You can ignore Gantz", and Mami-san had explained the real reason behind all this attention.

"Everyone wants to get acquainted with Yun-san. They probably think that you appearing here is an opportunity."

"With ME? I'm not that strong..."

"Other than that, you're a really pretty girl so all the guys want to get close to you with ulterior motives——"Stop saying stuff that will make her uneasy!"——Oww?!!"

This time, Gantz was hit in the head with the mace. Hearing what he said, I made a completely disgusted expression.

"Umm, Yun-san. You already were a famous crafter, and thanks to Ryui's unveiling from yesterday, I think that everyone's interest in you has temporarily increased."

"So once we release you, you will probably be surrounded again, you know?"

I glared at Taku, who said that happily.

It was Taku who was the one who said I should do Ryui's unveiling before people swarm over to me, but seeing this it appeared that the unveiling had no effect anyway.

"I'll be logging out then. Taku, thanks for bringing me out of there."

"Come on, how about picking up the hidden quest together with us?"

I thought Taku said I was waiting for them in order to bring me out of the crowd, but in fact he intended to invite me to the party to do the quest.

"I told you before, right? That I'll help you gather chips."

"I don't really need any help with that..."

In fact, I could reach my goal of 50 Quest Chips without receiving this escort quest, just by finishing the apothecary's delivery quests and some more errand quests.

While I made a confused expression, Taku asked differently.

"Then help US out, Yun. We need you."

"...Well, if you really need me I wouldn't mind helping out."

Being told by Taku that I'm needed I felt a little embarrassed and agreed on taking the quest. I myself don't need anyone's support, but I did want to be of help to others.

Hearing me answer like that, Gantz and Minute grinned——

"To think Yun-chan was this simple to talk over. And Taku, seriously?! Aghh, this must be jealousy, murderous intent towards Taku is growing inside of me... I feel like now, I could use that combo from before!"

"Shut up Gantz. Rather than that, Yun-chan's flustered expression is completely that of a girl in love, the destructive power is outstanding."

Smacking Gantz' ass with the mace as he howled something, Minute guided us to the queue for the hidden quest.

Other than that, I felt slight killing intent from the surroundings, but ended up puzzled as I was unable to find it's source.

We stood in the long queue, during the wait I shared information with Taku

and others.

"I heard the quest summary from one of the recruiters earlier, Taku, what do you think about it?"

In response to my words, Taku smiled broadly.

"Best of all, I think is that we get 5 Quest Chips each. And the strength and number of mobs doesn't change with the number of participants, it's a really delicious quest for a full party."

"I'm not talking about that. I never did any escort quest, I'm asking if you got any advice."

"It's just normal combat. Though, in this case you are limited when it comes to weapon and armour. That is the bigger problem."

Taku was using dual long swords, but because of the limitation on the equipment he could only use one, and was unable to fight in his usual style.

"By the way, what is everyone going to use?"

"I'm using a single long sword, Gantz doesn't use weapons, Minute uses a mace, Kei a shield and Mami a staff."

"Is everyone in the same location?"

"I think we should be able to cope with everything if we split in three groups of two on the party venue."

And the pairings decided on were me and Taku, Gantz and Minute, Kei and Mami-san.

Also, there was a need of avoiding other non-relevant NPCs on the party venue, but there was no way to plan for that until we actually enter the location.

As the queue grew gradually shorter, Taku told me to relax.

"It's just a quest where you beat everyone who's attacking us, there's no need to worry."

"G-got it."

Since it's a bodyguarding quest, will I end up wearing some kind of suit? I

thought, hoping that the equipment I wear will not inhibit my movements. Meanwhile, our turn came.

"Welcome, adventurers. I would like you all to protect the organizer of today's party, our milady."

The Quest NPC bowed respectfully, it an elderly butler with a moustache and all-back hairstyle.

Although it was just an NPC, I kind of admired this kind of dandy people who had an atmosphere of a hard worker so I observed him closely.

"By the end of this year our master has been inviting nobles to parties every day. Among them, there are filth who aim to harm milady, our master's only daughter. With that said, we are unable to cancel the party either, thus we want you to join the party and protect milady."

After we listened to the base objective of the quest, Taku accepted it and the iron gate opened. We were guided into the mansion by a young butler NPC.

"Well then, we shall now prepare you for entering the party venue. Once you complete our request, everything will be brought back to original state. Now, I will be waiting in front of the room, please call me once you are ready."

Said the young butler and guided us to a room in the back, then, suddenly a menu appeared in front of us.

"Oh, so you can check what you cannot use inside, and select what you bring in."

I selected the **【Black Maiden's Longbow】** without any hesitation.

At the party venue you could not use armour equipment or tamed mobs, both **【Taming】** Sense and **【Summon】** skills were temporarily disabled.

I confirmed that there were no other restrictions and changed my Sense build.

Possessed SP45

【Bow Lv50】【Longbow Lv30】【Magic Bow Lv8】【Sky Eyes Lv14】【See-Through Lv24】【Swiftess Lv20】【Sorcery Lv18】【Enchant Arts Lv41】【Dosing

Master Lv7】【Physical Attack Increase Lv7】

Unequipped:

【Alchemy Lv44】【Synthesis Lv44】【Engraving Lv25】【Taming Lv23】【Earth Element Talent Lv29】【Crafter's Knowledge Lv3】【Cook Lv15】【Swimming Lv15】【Linguistics Lv24】【Climbing Lv21】【Bodily Resistance Lv5】【Spiritual Resistance Lv4】【Pre-Emptive Knowledge Lv8】【Vital Points Knowledge Lv8】

Since I couldn't bring in a knife as a weapon, I removed 【Cooking】-type Sense and in order to avoid destroying the party venue I removed 【Earth Element Talent】 which had many explosive attacks.

In exchange I equipped 【Black Maiden's Longbow】 and three bow-type Senses that were 【Bow】 【Longbow】 and 【Magic Bow】.

Since only one weapon could be brought during the this quest, it was simple to conclude that synergizing similar Senses was the best.

Although the 【DEX Bonus】 from my armour was removed, I somehow managed to make a bow-specialized build by the time Taku called out to me.

"Gantz and others finished preparing their equipment, what about you?"

"Oh, I finished too."

"Well then, let's call the butler NPC."

When we called the butler NPC standing in front of the room he immediately entered and requested confirmation.

"We shall now head towards the party venue. Are your preparations complete?"

"Yeah, no problem."

Once Taku responded, the butler responded with "then excuse me" and raised his left hand and pointed with his finger.

Matching his movement, my winter equipment I had on was instantly switched——

"Ohhh?! This is interesting."

"Why am I wearing a DRESS?!"

Taku, who was changed into a tuxedo in an instant, took a look around with interest. He surprisingly looked well in it, giving an impression of a refreshing young man.

Similarly, Gantz who was changed into a formal wear gave off a slightly rough feel and Kei appeared like a sportsman with his well-built body.

And, for the girls——

"Kyahh——!! Yun-chan, you're so cute!"

"Um, you look wonderful."

"Please, stop calling me cute when I'm wearing a dress. The dress suits you two much more than that."

I peeled Minute off me as she clung to me strongly and once again looked at the two's dresses.

Minute was wearing a bright orange dress that gave off an "active" impression, Mami-san was wearing indigo-blue colour that expressed her docile nature. Also, a pretty ribbon on her chest was a very good accent, it accented her girlish charms.

And finally for my clothes, I was wearing a jet black dress with simple purple decorations. It was decorated with lace at the hem and while there wasn't much difference compared to the one piece dress I wore before, I still felt reluctant when it came to wearing women's clothing.

"I'm a man, and yet..."

"Don't act so effeminate, c'mon, let's head to the party."

I muttered quietly so that only Taku heard, but he did not try to comfort me. He followed after the butler NPC who said "please, this way", and we quickly walked through the hallway to the party venue.

"Wait, there's no need to hurry so mu..."

I walked in a hurry, but the equipment restriction even affected my shoes and it was very difficult to walk. Since it was possible there will be combat ahead of

here, I was wearing low-heeled shoes which did not disturb movement. Still, I wasn't accustomed to wearing women's shoes so I entered the venue as the last one.



On the venue lit up with bright chandeliers and filled with dance song played by the orchestra, the participants danced and ate dishes, enjoying their time.

Walking below the chandeliers, we entered in the venue in pairs.

Gantz headed straight for the all-you-can-eat buffet and Minute had chased after him, appalled.

Mami-san wore the same shoes as I did and it seemed she wasn't used to them either, so she walked slowly as she held Kei's arm. Kei's figure as he gentlemanly escorted her was something I felt respect for.

I thought I would like to escort a woman the same way.

And, seeing me like that, Taku has— —

"What is it, Yun? Staring at Kei so much. Did you want him to escort you, or what?"

"I'm a man. Why do I even have to be escorted by you, Taku? Heck, I want to escort someone instead."

When I stared intently at Taku, he laughed and said it was a joke.

I heaved a small sigh.

Then, preparing for enemy's attack we moved closer to the dance floor.

Numerous men and women danced to the rhythm of music.

Among them, there was a blonde-haired NPC wearing a white dress, the escort objective of the quest.

"Now, Gantz and Minute are at the buffet table, Kei and Mami by the veranda. What about us?"

"If possible, I'd like to move closer to Milady NPC, it would be easier to protect her. Oh, how about hitting on her? That would make it easier to get

close."

"That sounds good. If it's possible, that is. Still, are Gantz and others okay?"

Gantz was going crazy about food and Mami-san was listening to orchestra's performance. I felt like they weren't vigilant enough.

"Each of their partners are properly watching the surroundings, so it's okay."

By Gantz' side, Minute was looking around her. Kei was leaning on the wall next to Mami, his arms crossed as he looked cautiously.

And, as for us——

"Yun, the target is on the move. We can't hit on her, but we can move closer by acting natural."

"Huh? Wait a second!"

I missed the target's movement because I was looking at others. Taku pulled me by my hand and we approached the dance floor filled with music, there, several pairs of NPCs were holding hands dancing together.

"Why are we going in there?! Are you trying to harass me?!"

"Nah, the target is dancing, that's all. You danced the female part of a dance during PE class before, right?"

"That was practice for folk dance in the elementary school! And I was made to because the number of boys to girls was uneven!"

"It's a fun story, now that I think about it."

Talking about the past he made a joyful smile and quietly moved to the centre of the floor. However, I had no intention of dancing in the first place.

"I never danced any social dances."

"How about we just imitate others?"

"No! I don't want to cling onto a guy!"

When Taku took my hand and looked into my face, I was unable to match his gaze and averted my sight.

Ahead of where I looked to, were Minute and Mami-san who stood in

position that allowed them to easily protect the target. They were looking my way with expectation.

Why did it turn out like this. I hope the escort target moves as soon as possible, I thought strongly.

However, it wasn't the escort target that made a move.

"Yun!"

"I know! 《Enchant》——Attack, speed!"

We let go of each others' hands and jumped in the opposite directions. I put an attack and speed enchant on Taku.

We avoided the chandelier that fell right on us, but tension increased as the entire room's lighting has decreased.

I pulled out the 【Black Maiden's Longbow】 from the inventory and jumped in front of the blonde girl who was the escort target.

Taku pulled out his weapon as well, he crossed swords with an NPC that appeared from the darkness and seemed to be an attacker.

In addition to using the only long sword he brought because of the weapon limit, Taku also used his arm and kicks for fighting against human mob.

I examined the dance venue with my 【Sky Eyes】 night vision ability and found two more attackers.

One of them was suppressed on spot by Gantz who completely ignored damage he received because Minute devoted herself to healing him.

The other one had his movements hindered by Kei's shield as Mami-san dealt damage with magic attacks.

Although I pulled out my bow, other NPCs who ran around in panic and members of our party got in the way of my shooting and I wasn't quite able to release the arrow.

In the middle of all this chaos, together with the blonde girl that was the escort target I escaped towards the wall and applied an enchant on us.

"Enemies themselves aren't too strong, are they? Heck, is there any point in

me being here?"

That was great news, but I felt it was too easy for the reward of 5 Quest Chips.

Meanwhile, Gantz took down the first attacker.

It would be nice if the other two were taken down just like that, I thought, but it wasn't as easy.

"——Khh! Sorry, I let him past!"

Kei yelled, and the black-dressed attacker headed towards us with a dagger raised up high.

The reason the attacker passed by Kei, was because he threw a knife towards Mami for a diversion and Kei moved to stop that.

"Yun! Be careful! Don't let him get any closer!"

Taku shouted while he himself was busy with restraining another enemy and was unable to move, Gantz who took down the first attacker was running towards me in order to assist but he wouldn't make it in time.

Now, it was just me between the incoming assailant and the blonde girl.

"I guess I have no choice but to do it. 《Enchant》——Attack, speed!"

I'll somehow manage if it's just one enemy. In worst case, I'll earn time until Kei and Gantz catch up.

Thinking so, I applied enchant on my self and aimed the 【Black Maiden's Longbow】.

Thanks to other NPCs moving from the assailant in order to escape, and him heading straight for us, it was easy to aim.

In order to earn as much time as possible I prepared an arrow with 【Paralysis】 bad status synthesized into it, in order to make sure I hit, I tried waiting until the enemy is in the perfect position.

However, he tried to jump over me and onto the escort target behind me, so I released the arrow while he was in mid-air.

"——Huhh?"

A dumbfounded voice reached my ears, it took me a few seconds it was my own voice.

The assailant received a paralysis arrow to the abdomen from a close range and instead of his movements stopping due to paralysis, it seemed like he was pulled back as he was blown away, spinning in the air.

It was like he was hit by an invisible iron ball in mid-air, the sight left us astounded.

After falling down, the enemy bent down and didn't move even an inch.

Then, Taku defeated his opponent and approached the assailant who was blown away from in front of me to confirm he was taken out.

While I was astounded by what I did everyone gathered up and a piece of information appeared stating that the milady escort quest has been completed.

And— —

"...Yun. What did you do?"

Taku stared at me intently, but I couldn't answer his question as I myself didn't know why did this happen.

I intended to release the arrow normally...

When I looked at the enemy who was blown away, I saw that part of his clothing was damaged and underneath there was chain armour protecting him, but it was not enough to stop the impact.

However, it was a mystery why did the arrow produce such impact, so I ended up asking Taku.

"How did this happen?"

"No, don't ask ME. We have to check for difference between your last attack and what you used so far."

Taku muttered in amazement. In response I counted out differences one by one on my fingers.

In the meantime, Mami-san was comforting Kei who was depressed by the fact he let the enemy pass by, Gantz and Minute were speaking with the milady

NPC who was the escort's target and a newly appeared nobleman NPC, doing the finishing touches for the quest.

"There is a limit on my armour so I don't have the usual DEX Bonus. I use the same 【Black Maiden's Longbow】 I always do, and the arrow I used was one with paralysis in it."

"Your accessories?"

"Other than the defence-focused 【Substitute Gem's Ring】 I have nothing that affects stats too much. And that ring won't show any effect when the enemy is taken down before reaching me. For my Sense build, it's 【Bow】, 【Longbow】 and 【Magic Bow】——"Wait!"——Hm?"

He interrupted me, so I stopped counting the differences on my fingers and wondered with puzzlement "is there something wrong with that?".

"Yun, tell me what's your Sense build right now."

"Umm, it's 【Bow】 【Longbow】 and 【Magic Bow】 【Sky Eyes】 【Swiftiness】 【See-Through】 【Magic】 【Enchant Arts】 【Dosing Master】 and 【Physical Attack Increase】. For the weapon I use my 【Black Maiden's Longbow】 so I focused on the Senses boosting my bow... also, I picked 【Dosing Master】 to increase my DEX."

"You... didn't you think there's something off with that build?"

Told so by Taku, I thought about it and concluded.

"Is there? Ah, you mean that almost all of it is focused on the Bow Sense?"

"Not that. You have three bow Senses equipped, don't you."

So what? I asked, making Taku heave a tired sigh.

I combined the 【Longbow】 and 【Magic Bow】 before and before I acquired 【Magic Bow】 I used to combine 【Bow】 and 【Longbow】. Did combining three of them at once really produce such a dramatic effect?

"Yun, you might not remember, but there are secondary effects to these Senses aside from damage correction, aren't there?"

Hearing this, I vaguely recalled that indeed there was something like that.

For example, players who used either 【Sword】 or 【Smithing】 Senses could deal damage with a sword.

However, using the 【Smithing】 Sense only allowed the player to attack, and did not give him any corrections to using the weapon or Arts.

And since the correction is set individually for each of these Senses, they sometimes overlapped.

"There are cases where people hold multiple Senses of sword or spear types, but it's my first time seeing someone who equipped three of the unpopular Bow Sense."

"Meaning, what I did earlier was..."

"The knock-back effect multiplied due to equipment of triple bow Senses. Adding to that, were 【Physical Attack Increase】 and enchant stat increase. Furthermore, the enemy was in short range and in mid-air..."

Normally it would be impossible for someone to be blown away like he was hit by cannonball with just an arrow. I guess I should say "as expected of fantasy world"?

I myself was surprised by the fact it by what happened because of the triple Bow Sense equipment, but the first words I spoke after hearing Taku's conjecture were——

"——I wasted a paralysis arrow."

"That's the thing that bothers you?!"

"Arrows synthesized with bad status are valuable consumables. I wouldn't have used one if I knew it'd be such an overkill..."

Hearing my answer, Taku let out a sigh of exasperation.

"This is a big opportunity to change the difficult-to-handle Bow Sense's low-evaluation. How about you rejoice for this good news?"

The enemy this time was a human NPC, but if it's also effective against medium and large mobs, this will open new possibilities for the 【Bow】-type senses.

However, since I was a crafter at the base, I wasn't very interested in that.

While we discussed what happened, Gantz and others finished the quest and we have gathered in front of NPCs who appeared to have something to say.

"Looks like they will be talking about the next of the chain quest."

The blonde Milady NPC and an aristocrat NPC that appeared to be her father spoke of the quest's content.

"The attackers this time appear to be fanatics who worship the devil. They attempted to kidnap my daughter who has noble blood in her in order to use her as a sacrifice for summoning the devil."

"Looks like a quest to protect a single NPC escalated really quick, can I go home yet?"

Honestly speaking, I had no intention of pursuing this quest any further. But, the aristocrat NPC continued.

"There are fanatics still remaining in their hideout, they may aim to try kidnapping my daughter again in the future. Thus, I wish for you who have protected my daughter this time, go to their hideout and crush them!"

——【CQuest - Devil Cultists' Hideout Destruction】——

Enter the Devil Cultists' Hideout. —— 1/4

This kind of big quest would be quite difficult. Moreover, they said it hasn't been completed by anyone yet. I'm sure even without me participating, someone will eventually complete it. That's how I felt.

"Please, do your best for my daughter's safety."

Still, seeing as the aristocrat NPC lowered his head deeply, and of how a parent protecting his child feels, I had mixed feelings about this.

The young butler NPC who had brought us here upon entering, had guided us to the exit this time.

"Well then, I shall now give you all the belongings the attackers had with

them. They might be a clue to finding their hideout."

He said and each of us received a quest item: 【Map to Devil Cultists' Hideout】.

Then last, when the restriction on everyone's equipment was cancelled and everyone returned to their winter clothes, the butler NPC spoke again.

"The equipment you wore at the party venue is yours, you can take it back home."

"No, I don't need it!"

My resistance was in vain, and against my will I received the 【Pure Black Coordinated Dress】 as one of the quest rewards.

Chapter 3 - Devil Cultists and Mansion Infiltration

After we cleared the quest we have undertaken, we have automatically received the next part of the chain quest.

However, since I have reached 50 Quest Chips when completing this quest I had no need to continue questing. I did not, but...

"This escort quest was a really valuable experience. Thanks guys, I'll be go ——"Yun, let's talk for a moment with everyone before you log out."——Tch, couldn't get away, huh."

I wanted to log out as naturally as possible and get back to my daily life, but Taku grasped my shoulder and stopped me from leaving.

"I know that you have no intention of continuing this quest, Yun."

"Then why do you stop me from leaving?"

"Just think about this for a moment. Lots of players have attempted to finish this quest but didn't manage, it's very difficult and of course, the reward must be nice. Let's talk about this taking that into the account."

Standing in front of Taku, I focused on listening.

"First, if you come with us you will receive a good amount of Quest Chips and items that suit the quest's high difficulty."

Taku opened his menu and has showed off the reward for the 【CQuest - Devil Cultists' Hideout Destruction】 chain quest that we received.

It was 20 Quest Chips for each party member and a mysterious reward displayed as 【???】.

Not only the reward constituted of more Quest Chips than the multi-party

raid quests did reward, the mysterious reward tickled a gamer's heart enough to make them rush towards the quest's completion.

Continuing, Taku spoke of the less attractive conditions for the quest.

"As for the demerits, it would be the high difficulty that will make us spend a fair amount of time to complete it."

"In other words, if we challenge the quest and fail we will just waste time."

Minute said, and Taku nodded in response.

Certainly, no matter how special the reward is, if a quest takes an entire week of time not only we will not benefit from it, but be in the red. By gathering 3 Quest Chips a day, one could gather 21 chips within a week instead.

Well, it all depends on the mysterious reward, but taking too long on one quest is still a big loss.

"That's why I want everyone to decide whether we use the limited amount of time we have to complete this quest."

"Yeah! I want to try do this quest!"

Gantz didn't show any sign of thinking before approving the proposal to do the quest. While amazed by his reaction speed, Kei shared his opinion.

"I'd like to continue this quest, too. However, is there any need to calculate like that? We can decide on a deadline, and stop the quest progress when we reach it in order to complete other quests we still haven't done."

What he said was very constructive, Minute and Mami-san agreed with him and approved.

And then, Taku spoke to me next.

"So, what about you, Yun?"

"I'll—"

I closed my eyes to think.

At first I had no intention of continuing this quest, but I feel like trying since it's a time-limited quest.

Also, in order to craft Mega Potions and MP Pots for 【Atelier】 I need to increase the number of Mystic Medicinal Grass and Mystic Spirit Grass anyway.

Well, Mixing-related quests from Obaba's pharmacy and the errand quests around the town could be completed in fairly short amount of time anyway. Even if we don't finish that quest, I already have enough Quest Chips too. There is no need to rush.

"Fine, I'll help out. However, if we get to a point where it's clear we can't finish the quest I will give up on it."

"Great! It's decided! Then let's disband for today, we'll challenge the quest starting tomorrow."

I might have rushed the decision a little, I thought and logged out for the day.

The next day——I logged into OSO immediately after coming back from school and appeared in 【Atelier】's workshop, I slipped through the store part to the main street, aiming for a certain place.

It was the church plaza, the one I have first met up with Myu and Sei-nee when OSO first started.

Taku and the others were already there.

"Sorry, am I late?"

I opened the menu to check the time, but it appears I made it for the meeting time.

"Hello, Yun-chan. It's just everyone coming too early."

Saying so, Minute greeted me with a smile.

"Well then, let's get on with the quest. We gathered some info from other players who tried to do it, first we'll move to where the map quest item points to."

Said Taku. Everyone looked at 【Map to Devil Cultists' Hideout】, a place in the Northwest part of the First Town was marked on the simplified map.

"Um... is this the place?"

"Yeah."

When we arrived at the place marked on the map, we saw a single mansion standing there.

Although it was as big as the mansion of the Noble NPC client that we have entered for the first quest, it had a somewhat desolated atmosphere to it.

The main gate was wide open, but the gathered players did not enter and instead, were exploring outside the mansion.

"Hey, are they all...?"

"They all probably are players who received the same quest, aren't they? But it looks like they can't enter the place itself."

There were over six parties worth of players and all of them have desperately searched for a way to enter, but it didn't seem like anyone managed to enter the 【Devil Cultists' Hideout】.

"What's going on? This IS the location marked on the map, isn't it?"

"Well, it's because the first part is "infiltrating the hideout". Items like these wouldn't be necessary if it was so easy to enter."

While Taku muttered those words, there were players in front of us who tried to climb the iron fence around the mansion to enter, but along with the sound of a bell they all stopped moving and fell down.

Next, black-hooded NPCs who appeared to be Devil Cultists came out from hiding in order to carry the players and drop them outside the gate.

That moment, the restriction on players was broken, they appeared quite frustrated.

"If you make such open attempts or you're found, a sound of bell rings out and players become unable to move and the quest is forcibly rendered as failed."

"Can't something be done about not being able to move, like making preparations against bad statuses?"

"No. Apparently the only way to prevent that, is to defeat the cultists that ring the bell."

"Then how do we beat those ringing cultists?"

"No one knows where they are and our movement is sealed the moment we pass the iron fence."

It's a game, there must be a way to get past that, I thought when I heard that. Figuring out what I was thinking, Taku said.

"When there's a way for a country-saving hero to let himself be found trying to enter bandits' den and surrender to let himself be brought into the den and locked in a cell, you don't just go "cut them all down!", right?"

"It's as you say, sir."

Hearing Taku say this, I reflexively imagined such strange action be taken by the green hero.

Meanwhile, Gantz and others seemed amused by our conversation as I could hear their muffled laughter.

"D-don't laugh!"

"Well, it seems like there are multiple ways to enter, let's try them."

In any case, we have to infiltrate the hideout first.

"Based on how the quest appears to look like, it will be divided into several steps. Hideout infiltration, searching the hideout and probably boss battle. I guess it'll take a day for each step."

"Hmm..."

I groaned while observing from afar as the players try to infiltrate the mansion.

Basically, all the players who entered had their movement stopped by the sound of bell coming from the inside.

Also, when the bell sounded at one of the players who tried to get past the iron fence, two other players dashed through the front gate. One of them was immediately stopped by the sound of bell, but the other seemed to have either **【Concealment】** or **【Recognition Inhibition】**-type Sense or equipment as the bell sounded for him a bit slower.

In other words, the bell sounded for each intruder separately and everyone only received the effect of their own bell.

"So, how about we go look at the other infiltration routes? When we separated yesterday I came here and found several entrances."

"What kind of places are they?"

"While there are several, the one with the highest chance of success is a route connected to a dry well on the North side. It requires players to fight boss-level mobs one after another and leads to the hideout's lower chambers."

Nope. I thought when I heard this.

Fighting boss-level monsters only scrapes away my spirit. I started searching for another method to avoid going through that.

"When battling in the underground passage the bosses don't revive, so even though it takes time to get past we will get to explore the hideout by tomorrow."

"Taku, before that – can I try infiltrating from the front one time?"

"If you're found several times the quest is failed... so just once."

Taku exchanged glances with Gantz and others, then agreed while giving a condition.

"Thanks. If it doesn't work, I'll properly go with you on the other route."

I said so, and while worried whether I'll be able to get in with my own method I took out a white summoning stone.

"Come, Ryui—《Summon》!"

Summoning the now adult Unicorn, Ryui, I stroked his back.

Help me out a little, I said and took his reins while holding his body.

Turning transparent along with Ryui's body, I moved towards the mansion's gate.

Our party members quietly watched our actions while we maintained transparency.

During the reveal, Ryui managed to deceive everyone's eyes. It might work if it's Ryui's transparency skill, I thought as we slowly passed through the gate.

When we were halfway to the mansion's entrance——

——**RRRRINNGGGGG*!*

Hearing a clear sound of a bell I stopped in my tracks.

Was I found? I panicked and nearly let go of my hand touching Ryui, but bearing it I took a look around.

Then, I saw a Devil Cultist standing on the balcony of the mansion who was shaking a bell in a different direction to where I was. I see, so he's watching from a high place and rings the bell the moment an intruder is found, huh?

Understanding that the bell responded to another intruder, I started moving again for the time being.

When I reached the entrance to the mansion and touched the door, it opened without me having to put much strength.

Since it was in a blind spot when looking from a balcony, the cultist on it did not notice me opening the door.

I had Ryui remove the transparency there.

"...70% MP remaining, huh. There's plenty to spare."

I used an MP Potion just in case, recovering to max then once again had Ryui put transparency on us to return back to where Taku and others stood.

"Looks like we can get in."

Hearing me say so as if nothing happened, Taku stared at me intently.

"Looks like...? Why do you have succeed so easily using the hardest route there is?"

Taku said so with amazement and heaved a sigh, everyone else nodded in agreement.

"W-well, just think that we're one day ahead of the schedule."

I looked away in order to avoid their stares.

"But, what area can Ryui's transparency cover? Can it include players other than you?"

Kei pointed out, making everyone go "ah!".

I wonder about that. Can Ryui's transparency only cover me, the summoner? But it always includes Zakuro who is together with us, so the area of effect must be quite wide.

"Mami-san, lend me your hand."

"Y-yes!"

I called Mami-san, who was the nearest person standing to me and held her hand, then touched Ryui with the other hand and asked him to activate the transparency.

Starting with my hand touching Ryui, transparency slowly spread and covered both me and Mami-san.

"So it's possible to use it on multiple players."

"Looks like it. But..."

One thing that bothered me, was that the amount of MP consumed increases all at once.

The MP that tamed mobs need in order to use their skills is being taken from the player who summons them. I measured the amount of MP consumed when I walked towards the entrance earlier, together with Mami-san I consumed far more MP as compared to that.

"Minute, can you hold hands with Mami-san?"

"Got it."

When Minute held Mami-san's transparent hand, she gradually turned transparent starting from her hand.

However, that moment my MP consumption had further increased and before Minute completely disappeared, Ryui's transparency was forcibly cancelled.

"This is..."

Kei muttered seeing what's happening, so I explained.

"The MP consumption increases when there's more people."

"Then movement towards the mansion's entrance is..."

"For a short amount of time I can take three people at once."

During combat it doesn't seem possible for three people to be hidden, but it should be all right if it's just moving some distance.

Hearing my conclusion, Gantz yelled.

"GREAT! I'll be holding hands with Yun-chan and Mami-san as we move onto the entrance—" "Shut up there."—"GUEH?!"

Minute thrust her mace at Gantz's throat, forcibly silencing him and quickly took my hand, then held Gantz by his neck with her opposite hand.

"Let's go now."

"Ah, yes."

I lost out to the pressure Minute was giving off, after recovering my MP I asked Ryui to hide us and we moved to the entrance under transparency.

The sight of Gantz being dragged on the cobblestone while transparent was quite surreal.

After that, I left the two by the entrance and once again returned to the gate with Ryui.

Next, I moved Mami-san and Kei. For the last round I walked together with Taku, and succeeded delivering everyone to the entrance.

When I arrived by at the entrance together with Taku, the two of us holding hands, I felt quite bothered by Gantz and Minute's gaze but decided to ignore it.



"Sorry, Ryui. Looks like I can't take you any further."

Because of a system restriction middle-size tamed mobs could not be summoned inside the mansion.

Thinking it must be because the action takes place in rooms, I returned Ryui to the summoning stone and entered the mansion.

The moment I entered the doors of the mansion, the world changed along with the sound of my step.

The world filled with sunlight disappeared and I entered a dim interior.

"Ohhh, so that's how it looks like inside the mansion, this sure will be a pain."

Everyone was confused by the radical difference between the outside and the inside of the mansion, Gantz was the only one who cheerfully raised his voice as he inspected the entrance.

The brightness of the outside and presence of people has disappeared, the incredible silence pained my ears.

Darkness spread in the space outside the window, the light inside the mansion came from thin candlesticks set on the wall at even intervals. Candles' flame was swaying unsteadily.

"So this is Devil Cultists' Hideout interior... seeing as the space changed between inside and the outside, I guess it's treated as a dungeon?"

Gantz muttered. His thinking was probably correct.

We couldn't feel any presence at all inside the mansion, aside from our own.

"Hey, Taku. There should be other players who entered the mansion aside from us, why aren't they here?"

"Well, I guess each party has a separate instance for themselves? I didn't hear anything about parties meeting inside."

"I see, no wonder."

Although the entrance route from the outside was shared, the inside of the mansion was on exclusive instance for each party.

It might have been set this way in order to stop parties from getting in each other's way, competing for items, dragging others into combat and other kinds of hindering each other.

"Let's gather hints and quest items around the mansion to progress with the

quest... Everyone hide."

I raised my head hearing Taku's words, on top of the spiral staircase that stood in the center of the entrance hall stood a human figure.

We hid under the stairs and behind pillars so that the presence on top of the stairs doesn't find us.

While everyone held their breath, a man wearing a black robe and holding a candlestick had only passed by on the second floor. It was probably just a patrol.

Thanks to the night vision of 【Sky Eyes】 I saw the face of the man, lit by the candlestick's light his face was hideously altered.



Moreover, his body visible over the robe had one arm hideously deformed and bloated, the man walked while dragging it behind himself.

When the light above disappeared, everyone let out the air they were holding in.

"Huff, to think that there are NPC-turned monsters in here..."

"Hmm. They ARE called cultists, it wouldn't be so strange if they had a devil ruling over them from behind, deforming them and making them into their puppets, right? Anyway, look at the quest description."

Everyone checked their quest log in response to Taku's words.

——【CQuest - Devil Worshipers' Hideout Destruction】——

Explore the Devil Cultists' Hideout. —— 2/4

Gantz and others opened the menu and checked the status.

Taku who had confirmed the quest details earlier turned towards us, seeking our opinion.

"I think we should search rooms one by one."

"Naw, it would be faster if we go after the patrolling NPC."

Minute and Gantz shared their different ideas and looked into each others' face.

Then asked Taku for his opinion.

""Which plan do we choose?!""

Their voice was quiet but powerful, I focused on watching the three.

"Let's see. Searching the rooms one by one like Minute says is a basic method, but this mansion is quite large so it will take some time. We might be able to narrow down the places we search to the important rooms by tailing the patrol, but the risk we'll be found is high."

Mentioning the good and bad sides of both strategies, Taku crossed his arms and sought opinion from Kei, who also took a similar pose.

"What do you think, Kei?"

"We can't take too much time doing this but I think we need to get some grasp on the mansion's structure since we'll be fighting in here. That's why, one day to search as many rooms as we can on the first floor, and tomorrow we will tail the patrolling NPC on the second floor, how about that? There is no need to risk being found right from the start."

"Sounds reasonable. The first and second floors are probably similar so it will be easy to grasp the structure. I really don't think we can just force our way forward that easily by stalking the NPC."

Taku muttered. First, for the time being we started exploring the first floor of the mansion.

On the second floor of the corridor that could be seen from the entrance we could occasionally see the deformed NPC holding a candlestick. Patrolling NPC on the first floor were not deformed, the patrols on the first floor were really bad, allowing us to easily avoid being found by hiding ourselves the moment we saw one.

When we moved between the rooms, it was Gantz and me who were in front.

"Hey, Taku? Why is it me and Gantz who are in front? I'm supposed to be rear guard."

"In this party the only one who has Sense that can detect traps is you, Yun. Also, Gantz has the 【Trap Disarm】 Sense so the two of you make the best combination."

Certainly I do have the 【See-Through】 Sense that allows me to find traps. Furthermore, in combination together with 【Sky Eyes】 that granted night vision it was very suitable for searching the dim Mansion Still—— "You had the 【Trap Disarm】 Sense, Gantz?"

"I got it after the fairy quest. As dungeon difficulty level increases, the trap difficulty increases as well and we could no longer rely on brute-force methods, and thus I got it."

So that was the reason, I thought, but seeing as his 【Trap Disarm】 Sense had low level we couldn't feel completely safe.

I decided to focus on moving in a way to avoid traps, rather than let him disarm them.

"Well, I'll make a map as we explore."

I took out the pen and paper I used when noting down 【Mixing】 combinations and started drawing schematics of the mansion as far as I could see around us.

"Speaking of which, Yun-chan, didn't you draw a map before during the fairy quest?"

Gantz muttered, he seemed to remember that I made a map when we were doing fairy quest.

"If we have data on the entire mansion's structure we might be able to find something out."

I said and I drew the entrance to the mansion and the passage we were in.

"It will be easier to check things later, it's all up to you, Yun."

Told so by Taku, I continued along with Gantz along the passage and found several traps.

"Clapper, alarm, a pitfall, hypnotic gas. There's lots of traps that hinder players' action and alert the NPCs."

Walking through the corridor we searched the rooms we could enter. Although most of the rooms on the first floor appeared open, they had traps set up hindering us from entering.

When we investigated these traps we noticed that they were easy traps that could be found even without any Senses. We either disarmed or avoided them as we searched the mansion and we found items, potions, consumables and gold that served as secondary rewards.

And when we finally found the only locked room——

"There're weapons here, too... but are they made from gold?"

Inside a clean room Gantz had opened with his low-level 【Trap Disarm】's 《Unlock》 skill we found lined up wooden boxes. Stored inside them, were

weapons made of gold that weren't fit for actual use.

Moreover, there were few dozens of them with enough weapon types to equip the entire party.

Golden weapons couldn't be used in actual combat, but they could be crushed and remade into Gold Ingots for which we could earn money. Well, personally there were no items that caught my attention, but...

"This feels kind of artificial. I'll take two long swords for now."

Said Taku and pulled out two rich-looking swords.

Minute took a mace with a jewel embedded into it, Mami-san – a gold-plated staff. Kei reluctantly picked up a golden armor, shield and long sword making him a possessor of the most shiny equipment.

"And Gantz's equipment is..."

"I don't actually need any equipment since I'm a martial artist who fights with bare hands."

"Then what's left are metal spears, arrows and throwing knives."

I put those distasteful items into my inventory, planning to remake them into ingots later.

We searched for other places on the first floor but we haven't found any room or item that seemed like our goal, instead, we found something interesting.

"So this is where the infiltration route leads."

We found a basement that was connected to a cellar with wine, when we descended it we found that it connected the mansion with the dried-up well.

Since I was wary of the consecutive boss battles I couldn't check the inside of the underpass with my Senses, so Taku and Gantz got down there directly but there were no mobs at all inside.

"Looks like once you infiltrate the hideout once, all other routes are opened."

"That's great, we won't have to cautiously leave this place through the main entrance."

Seeing me relieved that we won't have to leave through the front, everyone smiled wryly.

During the search of the first floor we found a few other infiltration routes, but nothing that would seem like quest's key items.

"We've checked the entire first floor, but it really feels like a reward for players who have cleared the quest up to this point. I guess the real thing starts on the second floor."

Everyone nodded in response to Taku's words, we took a step forward—

"—Oh, it's dinner time."

The alarm I set up in my menu reminded me of the time, everyone else also realized it was already evening.

I logged into OSO as soon as I came back from school and we've been searching for about two hours. If I stay logged in any longer Myu would probably complain that dinner's late.

"Certainly, it's good time to take a break."

"True. Let's leave through the well for the time being."

Kei and Mami-san agreed that it's about time for a break. With the search of the first floor complete, we escaped the mansion.

When we climbed up the rope ladder hanging inside the dry well we saw players line up to infiltrate the hideout, we were also welcomed by evening sun and cold wind.

"So what do we do about continuation? We gather later in the evening?"

Taku brought up the topic of plans for doing next part of the quest, but Minute answered apologetically.

"Sorry, I don't have time this evening. How about tomorrow evening?"

"What about everyone else?"

Taku confirmed the schedule with everyone and logged out.

After logging out, Myu and I shared information on our current situation as we

ate dinner.

"Hee, so you cleared the bodyguard quest in that mansion, Onii-chan."

"Yeah, and then continuing I ended up helping out with hideout destruction chain quest."

While explaining to Myu what happened, I extended my chopsticks towards food. For dinner I prepared chicken wings and boiled eggs with vinegar, oil and sugar, simmered with ginger and vegetables, as well as miso soup.

Chicken wings I simmered inside pressure cooker were soft and giggly, the taste permeated well and it was delicious.

Thinking of which, OSO has an item similar to ginger so it might be possible to reproduce this dish with Cockatrice's meat. While I thought so, Myu took a strong interest in the quest.

"Hee, so you undertook that quest too. Apparently it's an incomplete quest, how does it look like?"

"Well, it's a quest you can't complete just by brute force. The main entrance has high security, but aside from that one there are other special ways to infiltrate. The route through dry well forces you to beat multiple bosses one after another. Though, once you enter the mansion once all other routes open up for you, until then it's kinda harsh. Also, there's a malformed NPC patrolling the inside of the mansion."

"Hm-mm. Then I'm sure Tobi-chan would play a huge role for our party!"

Although in Taku's party it was Gantz who played the scout's role, he just barely started leveling up Senses related to scouting and was inexperienced.

"I heard lots about that quest, too. If I'm not wrong, someone said that you can't kill the patrolling NPC inside the mansion."

"What I heard was that once you're found several times, the quest is forcibly labeled as failed."

"Information I have was something I heard just a while ago. The patrolling NPC is fairly strong and can't be beaten alone, it takes quite some time to beat one. Meanwhile other NPCs gather and once there's a certain number of them,

players have their movements forcibly restrained and are thrown out of the mansion."

"Does that mean the same kind of bell as the one outside is used? If that's the case, it's definitely forbidden to force your way through. Still, if you have more than one chance it's probably not that bad?"

"If it was possible, I'd love to rampage around inside that mansion!"

Does she mean, that kind of scene? Slashing enemies on top of the spiral stairs and have their bodies roll down? I wondered as I listened to her.

"Well, we'll proceed cautiously and avoid using force."

"Do your best, Onii-chan. I'll be going with Sei-oneechan's 【Eight Million Gods】 to beat the raid quest!"

Apparently, they're preparing meat for the party that's to be held in 【Eight Million Gods'】 guild home in a few days.

The dinner ended as we talked like that, Myu sipped some tea after eating and I washed dishes.

As we spend the after-dinner time in silence, Myu suddenly muttered as if recalling something.

"By the way... I heard that once you finish that bodyguard quest you receive a party dress——"All right, let's prepare the bath!"——Hey, Onii-chan?!"

I overlapped my voice over Myu's mutter and quickly headed to the bath after finishing the dish washing.

I heard her voice calling me from the living room, but I decided to ignore it.



I took a bath, then during the little time I had before going to sleep I logged into OSO and did some crafting inside 【Atelier】.

Sorting today's spoils, I took the golden items aside from Golden Arrows and melted them in the Magical Furnace to return them back to Gold Ingots.

The workshop at night was lit up by light spilling out from flames of a lantern

and a Magical Furnace.

I poured the melted gold into a forms for ingots, then once they cooled down a little I removed the forms and struck the surface with black iron hammer.

The impurities surfaced and a high-purity ingot was crafted.

"Phew, I guess it's something like this?"

After I finished processing golden weapons other than arrows, I had a stack of Gold Ingots on the table.

"So, what do I do with this? It's pure gold, maybe I should use it for alchemy instead of accessories?"

Happy that I got some materials I made a loose smile and picked up the ingots. That moment— A knocking sound came from the store part of 【Atelier】, making me stop working.

"W-what is it?!"

I turned towards the store with an anxious expression on my face. Hearing a knocking sound again my body twitched.

Neither Ryui nor Zakuro were summoned now and Kyouko-san had closed the store and left long ago. I wasn't waiting for anyone either.

Feeling like I was in some kind of horror movie, I fearfully checked the inside of 【Atelier】 and saw a shadow by the closed doors, the shadow knocked on the door time after time.

I entered the store while making sure not to make any sound. Probably because of 【Cold Damage】, or maybe because of the horror atmosphere, I felt a chill on my back and trembled slightly. Moving to the doors, I fearfully opened them.

When I did, standing there was—

"Brrr, so cold! Can I enter?"

"Huh, so it's you, Taku. Don't scare me. You should have called or messaged if you're coming."

"I did call you when you logged in, it was you who didn't pick up."

"Eh, seriously?!"

I hurriedly opened the menu when Taku refuted and indeed, there was a message from him.

When it came, I was concentrating on remaking golden weapons into ingots and didn't notice.

"Sorry, I didn't notice. So, you need something?"

"Well, it's not on the level of "need", I have some spare time now and wondered if you'd go with me to gather some materials for simple delivery quests."

"Haa, if you're that desperate I'll just share with you some materials I have."

I said and guided Taku inside 【Atelier】.

Since the oven's and stove's flames weren't lit I guided Taku inside the still-warm workshop and prepared tea.

"C'mon, drink this, it will warm you up."

"Oh, is this a 【Hot Drink】? It gives 【Cold Resistance】 when drank, right. Thanks."

I looked as Taku drank the slightly spicy drink made from grated Hakuga Roots and sweetened with honey to make it easier to drink, then raised cup of my own to my mouth.

"So? What kind of materials do you need? Mob's drop material? Or maybe some ore-type?"

"Nah, I wanted some herbs. I thought you could help me out gathering them since you know where the collection points are."

He said and opened the menu to show me the list of quests he accepted. They were the quests I already finished.

I opened the item box that was 【Atelier】's item storage and took out the necessary items, then passed them to Taku through trade.

He put in 100k into the trade window, but I refused that.

"These materials aren't worth this much, drop the 100k."

"It's my thanks. And I'll get 3 Quest Chips when I clear this quest, too. Thinking of the time expanse, this is a fitting price, right?"

Since one Quest Chip was worth 30k I was talked into accepting the money by Taku and the trade was established.

Afterwards, Taku who was looking around the workshop with interest had found the ingots placed a table.

"Hey, Yun. Are those Gold Ingots...?"

"I made them from the weapons we found in 【Devil Cultists' Hideout】 today. But seriously, this is really lots of gold. I wonder if there's some meaning behind this."

"I don't know either, but since there was a lock on that room it's possible that there's some meaning behind it. Among the new info, there's some saying that it's best to completely avoid fighting against the mansion's NPCs."

"I heard of it from Myu. I'm wondering how are we supposed to search that mansion to have the quest continue."

As I said "search" I was struck by how vague it is, I had no idea what should we do.

"For the time being we should search the second floor, maybe we'll get some quest items. Could you show me the map you drew?"

Requested by Taku, I took out the schematics of the first floor that I made today.

With the entrance as the center, there were lots of small rooms on the left side and big rooms such as the dining room and kitchen on the right side.

"If the second floor's structure is similar to the first floor, I guess the quest's goal would be the right side of the second floor?"

"Well, thinking of this with gaming logic, yeah. A large room is necessary for a boss battle."

I voiced my realistic opinion as I looked down at the schematics together with Taku.

"Also, this isn't certain info but when you're found by the enemy NPC, he calls others from all over the mansion. You need to either beat him before he calls others, or restrain him so that he can't call them."

Taku said, making me put a hand on my chin and think.

In that case, I probably should prepare **【Sleep】** and **【Stun】** bad status inducing potions. I thought and moved to the item box in order to take out necessary items, but my hand stopped in the middle of it.

"Oh, bow isn't fit for fighting inside the mansion, so maybe I should prepare another way to fight. Maybe I should make something for Gantz to use."

Managing my longbow inside a narrow passage is difficult. In which case, in order to make some items for Gantz to use with his **【Throw】** Sense, I took out Iron Ingots this time.

Then putting them into Magical Furnace I melted them in order to make several dozen of iron and golden throwing needles.

Next, I synthesized those needles with bad status potions and made new items named **【Iron Sleeping Needle】** and **【Iron Stun Needle】**.

On a side note, if you ever wonder why didn't I make them from a Silver Ingot, it's because synthesizing silver with bad status potions causes the silver to turn dark and the attack power drops drastically.

Silver weapons have a bonus against undead mobs, but on the downside, it was very weak against poison and their compatibility excludes the mix.

In any case, I ended up engrossed in making the two types of throwing needles.

"Yun, you sure make interesting stuff."

"Ah! Sorry Taku, I forgot all about you."

I completely forgot Taku was there as I focused on making items.

Finding that interesting, Taku chuckled.

"Naw, I just thought that you're really lively like that. I'm glad I got to see a rare side of you like that."

Told so by him, I averted my sight diagonally downwards in embarrassment.

"You won't get anything out of me by flattery."

"I just said what I thought."

As if to escape from Taku's gaze, I forcibly passed half of the throwing needles I made to Taku.

"I'll take half with me, you take the other half."

"Got it."

Said Taku and put the throwing needles in his inventory, then suddenly made a serious expression and spoke again.

"I see you aren't scared during this quest."

"Huh? Why would I be scared?"

Not understanding what he said, I made a inquired back.

"You're quite bad with horrors, dark places and such, right? That's why although I invited you, I wasn't sure myself if 【Devil Cultists' Hideout Destruction】 isn't too much for you. I'm glad you're all right."

"You're misunderstanding something, Taku. It's not like I'm bad with all kinds of dark places and horrors."

Although others think that I'm reluctant to play horror games and watch movies because I'm bad with all kinds of horror stuff, but that wasn't the case.

"This quest doesn't feel much like horror to me. It might be dark inside the mansion, but there's no ghosts and the monster who's patrolling isn't much different from the mobs I'm usually fighting."

"Then, what's your distinction criteria for what's horror and what is not?"

Questioned, I put a hand on my chin to think. I haven't thought about this well before, but most likely the difference whether it's acceptable to me or not is — "This time's deformed NPC is a monster type and a mutant kind so it's okay. On the other hand, even a normal NPC would probably be worse if it was a malicious murderer. Also other stuff you know I'm bad with."

"So zombie and spirit types are out, huh? Also, you couldn't stand meat walls

so you're bad with guro, too."

"Yup, yeah. Those kind of things."

Things that can be categorized as SF which was monsters and mutant types made me think rather than scare me, so I quite enjoyed those.

On the contrary, zombies, spirits and guro roused instinctive fear in me so I was bad with those. Also, I was bad with sudden surprises, they were bad for my heart.

"Yun, you cut meat as you cook and yet you're bad with guro..."

"Stop, don't make me think about it. What if I turn unable to cook starting from tomorrow?"

Hearing Taku's mutter I protested with all my might, making him let out throaty laughter.

"Sorry, sorry. Still, I'm quite surprised to know something new about my childhood friend."

"Of course there'll be things you don't know. Sometimes I'm even surprised at myself."

While at first I was invited to play OSO by Myu and Taku so that I can meet Sei-nee, I never thought I would get so serious about playing it.

I thought so but didn't say it, meanwhile Taku shrugged and said "I guess you're right".

"Well, I'm relieved to hear that you won't suddenly panic during this quest."

"Hmm? Did you come to the store at a time like this so that you can confirm that?"

You could just ask about it tomorrow in school, I thought, but was a little happy for his consideration.

"All right Taku, see you tomorrow I guess?"

"See you tomorrow too, you mean. I wouldn't mind at all if you joined our party, Yun."

"Not happening. I like to play at my pace by myself."

Joking around, we bumped our fists and laughed.

That day both Taku and I logged soon after, but I felt like I received some motivation for tomorrow's quest.

Chapter 4 - Devil Statue and Hideout's Destruction

The next day, we have gathered in front of 【Devil Cultists' Hideout】 and then infiltrated the mansion through the dry well.

"All right. Today we'll investigate the second floor, do your best Yun, Gantz."

"Gantz, I made these thinking you might be able to use them, what do you think?"

"What is it? A present from you, Yun-chan... hm?"

What I passed to Gantz, were two types of metal throwing needles.

He stiffened as he looked at them, meanwhile, Minute peeked in from the side——

"This is... I see, Yun-chan wants Gantz to swallow these and shut up once and for all, huh."

"That's a roundabout way of telling me to kill myself, isn't it?!"

"Uh, no. Gantz has a 【Throwing】-type Sense so I thought he could use these needles that were synthesized with 【Sleep】 or 【Stun】 bad statuses in order to render the patrolling NPC harmless."

Right now the 【Throwing】 Sense has been integrated into his 【Martial Arts】 Sense, but the original throwing ability correction should have been inherited by the new Sense.

The needles that I passed to him had each been synthesized with powerful 【Sleep】 or 【Stun】 bad status. In case the enemy does not have resistance to bad status, they should be unable to move for approximately 20 seconds.

Gantz pulled out several iron needles from the bundle and put them between

fingers of his main hand, then snapping his wrist he threw them at the wall.

Soundlessly, the needles pierced slightly into the wall.

"Ohh, looks like using these fulfilled requirements for a new martial arts skill."

"SERIOUSLY?! What kind of requirement is that?!"

"Well, it's not a pure martial arts skill though, it's weapon martial art skill. It's name is 《Needle Strike》. You receive the skill when using your martial arts and delivering piercing damage with an expendable weapon, it says, huh."

"Why the poor reaction, Gantz? You get a free long-ranged skill, you profit right?"

"I already have the Strike and Flying Kick skills for ranged attacks so I'm not sure how should I react for this one."

"Well, with this you'll maybe pass some other skills' requirement."

Said Taku, and this conversation was over.

We climbed the spiral staircase near the entrance on the first floor and finally proceeded with the second floor's investigation.

"As we thought, there's more patrols on the second floor than there was on the first one."

While Taku muttered quietly, ahead of his line of sight was the deformed Devil Cultist NPC holding a candlestick, who was walking around the mansion. Because of the large number of patrols, the interval between their loops was quite short, we realized that soon after our six member party started moving.

"First of all, Yun, Gantz, could you find us a safe zone?"

"All right, let's make some room our base of operations and then slowly progress."

Moving ahead, Gantz and I searched for a safe place.

As we avoided traps with my 【See-Through】 Sense, we arrived to the left wing, the room closest to the staircase at the entrance.

After I confirmed together with Gantz that the room is safe, we gave a signal to Taku and the others who were waiting on the floor below and we all slipped

into the room.

"We'll make this room our base and investigate the second floor, but first let's investigate this room itself."

The two of us scouts listened to what Taku had to say and then once again started searching inside the room.

There were no items or quest information inside the room, but the furniture and such were much more luxurious as compared to the rooms on the first floor.

"Maybe the setting is that the first floor is servants' residence area and workplaces whereas the second floor is used by the owners?"

"In that case, based on the floor plan there should be a wide space on the right wing, like a dance hall."

hearing Mami-san's impression I responded by taking a look at the floor plan I drew myself.

By the way, the patrolling NPCs were turning clockwise inside this mansion so it would be difficult to go directly to the room on the right since it's going against the flow of the patrols.

Therefore we also should move clockwise and collect quest hints along the way. Is what I thought.

"So there's nothing here, huh. Let's have Yun and Gantz investigate the next room then."

"Leave it to us!"

Gantz's usual lively reply made me uneasy as I listened to the footsteps of the patrolling NPC who passed by, after which I sneaked out into the hallway.

Moving as not to be noticed by the patrols we checked one room after another, but there were much more locked rooms than there was on the first floor.

Gantz stopped in front of one of the locked rooms.

"Can you wait a moment, Yun-chan? I want to try something."

"What is it?"

"An idea flashed in my head, just like it happened for you yesterday."

As he said that, Gantz knelt in front the door to confirm there was no trap on it.

While I wondered what is he going to do, Gantz took out one of the iron throwing needles I made and twisted it by force.

Yesterday Gantz had a low success rate with his 《Unlock》 skill, but by making a picking tool out of a bent metal needle he seemed to intend on opening the lock with it.

Although he stubbornly challenged the lock, his 【Trap Disarm】 Sense wasn't too high so he had a hard time succeeding with a tool he made on spot.

Moreover he was working on a small keyhole inside a dim hallway, with not much more than the tactile feedback to go by.

"It feels like it's going to work..."

"No, it's taking a lot of time. Let's return to Taku and others, then look for another..."

Safe room, is what I was about to say when I noticed a light of a candle extending towards us.

We had to hurry back to the room we were in earlier.

However, if we didn't make it in fast enough, the patrolling NPC might see that we entered the room. If that happens, the rest of the party inside the room won't be able to escape and we will have to fight NPCs that come one after another.

"Gantz, give up! We'll come again!"

"Just a little more..."

Maybe because he felt a good response from the lock, but Gantz wouldn't move away from the door even as I pat his shoulder.

Filled with tension on the thought we'll be found, I planned countermeasures just in case.

Finish off the patrol NPC? No, these NPCs are quite strong and we could at most stop him in his tracks, if we attack and he calls for additional support we'll be in trouble.

In such case we should temporarily hide in the nearest empty room before joining up with Taku.

Or maybe look for one of the pitfall traps there are in the mansion and let ourselves fall onto the first floor, then run away?

Various thoughts passed through my head while the patrolling NPC has approached, but we could do nothing as long as Gantz didn't move from that place.

He was still concentrating on the door, so I resolved myself to believe in him.

And——

『"YOU, who are you!"』

The deformed NPC's filthy voice sounded and from under the robe he pulled out a slender knife that didn't match him.

When the NPC passed by the room Taku and others were waiting in——he suddenly collapsed to the side.

"Heey, what are you letting yourself be found, you two."

Taku, who was supposed to be waiting inside of the room was standing disgruntled behind the fallen NPC.

An instant later, Gantz successfully picked the lock and the door was opened along with a loud sound.

"Let's check out this room for now!"

"We're going in before the NPC wakes up."

Called in by Taku, Kei and others came out of the room they were waiting in and moved to enter the room Gantz was opening. Meanwhile I took a look at the fallen NPC.

Stuck into the robe on his back there were four iron needles, I realized they were the throwing needles I synthesized with bad status and passed to Taku.

In our party Gantz was the only one with 【Throwing】 Sense and could deal damage by throwing things, but even though Taku didn't have a Sense allowing him to deal damage the needles' synthesized effect was still properly applied.

After confirming that, I slipped into the room after Taku and others.

Then I stuck close to the door in order to listen to what's going on the corridor. The NPC who was deprived of consciousness by Taku was woke up probably by another NPC, and started to move.

"Seems like he slept for quite a while."

"They were throwing needles with 【Sleep 2】 right? It seems like the effect is multiplied if you use multiple needles, and the NPCs bad status resistance might have been adjusted quite low."

While the strength of the patrols was set quite high, on the contrary, their bad status resistance was set extremely low. Taku shared his opinion.

It appeared that the NPC beyond the door was thought to have suddenly fallen asleep as a side-effect of deformation and his memory before losing consciousness was a mess.

However, there was a more important problem than that.

"Gantz, why did you risk like that?! You were nearly found!"

If Taku didn't find a good moment to put the NPC to sleep there was a possibility we would be surrounded by other NPCs that he called.

Minute got furious at Gantz for doing that, in response Gantz scratched the back of his head along with a dry laughter.

"No, you're right. But it would be easier to hide while moving around if we have more safety rooms. So I thought we could make one as close as possible...ahaha."

He said apologetically and laughed, making me and Minute appalled and giving up.

Since he did think about the party as he did that, we couldn't blame him too strongly.

"Well, we're in, so might as well start by investigating this room before moving on."

Hearing Kei speak up we started moving to explore the room.

We already confirmed there was no trap on the door, but we had to be careful while investigating as there could be one inside the room.

However, instead of a trap, we found some equipment that was quite valuable as compared to yesterday's accessories.

"These accessories look quite usable. We'll split them once we're done with the quest. What do we do now, then?"

I spread out the floor plan on a suitable table and mapped the route we have moved and the doors we have checked, then had everyone look at it.

"Since Gantz can open doors, do we investigate the nearby closed doors?"

Taku nodded in response to Kei's question and glanced at Gantz.

"I guess we should. Though, we'll have Minute go with the two this time to keep Gantz in check."

He instructed Minute, who nodded in response.

Just earlier I thought with regret that if I stopped Gantz unreasonable actions I could reduce the risk of being found, but now I was relieved to hear that Minute will be there to hold his reins.

When the next patrolling NPC passed by the door of the room we were in, the three of us quickly moved into the corridor and started unlocking the nearest door.

As it was his second time and thanks to familiarity and system's support from leveling up, Gantz was able to open up the lock faster than before.

That room, was the room next to the room with a balcony that overlooked the entrance and where a Devil Cultist NPC was overlooking the surroundings. There was a hole in the wall and a wallpaper thanks to which we could peek into the next room.

Gantz and I peeked into the hole while everyone else eavesdropped through

the wall. We were able to hear the conversation the guard NPC's with a patrol NPC.

『"I gained this appearance THANKS to FOUNDER'S power, but still DON'T feel I'm in perfect condition. My memory feels TURBID at times."』

『"According to the founder, you will eventually accustom to the power. Still, don't force yourself too much."』

『"I KNOW. HOWEVER, we have to be on full guard to succeed in COMMENCING the next devil summoning ritual. Anyway, are there any ANOMALIES here?"』

『"No, from time to time there are some humans sniffing out around here, but we render them unable to move with this 【Binding Bell】 and throw them out."』

The guard NPC said that and pulled on the decorative cord linking two bells. That appeared to be the bell preventing everyone's entrance.

After that, the two cultist NPCs had a short conversation about work before returning to their respective duties.

We saw them off and then looked at each other.

"The quest has progressed. The conversation just now must have included the minimum necessary information for the objective to be completed."

——【CQuest - Devil Cultists' Hideout Destruction】——

Intrude upon the devil summoning's ritual site —— 3／4

The only fresh information for the progressed quest was the location of the devil summoning, we still hadn't enough info.

Taku seemed to think so as well, as he looked at everyone and spoke again.

"Personally, I think we should first gather information on the devil summoning ritual they are about to do."

"That's fine I guess? There's still plenty of rooms we still haven't checked."

I answered with a light tone, everyone else also agreed on gathering

information about the ritual.

Afterwards, we went around opening doors while being careful not to be found by the patrols. And the result—

- The devil summoning ritual involved summoning a devil's spirit into an object representing it and possessing it.

- The deformed NPCs are possessed by the lowest level of devil spirits.

Was that we acquired these two new pieces of information.

However, what we were looking for was a method to disturb the ritual and a method for extracting the devil spirits possessing the deformed NPCs. We had yet to find any information about enemy's weaknesses.

Then once again, in order to collect further information, me, Gantz and Minute moved ahead. The moment Gantz unlocked the room's door, an alarm sounded all over the entire mansion.

Hearing the high-pitched artificial sound we reflexively moved away from the door. Minute looked at Gantz.

"Gantz, did you miss a trap?"

"I don't think so, Minute. I checked it too. In any case, let's go back to where Taku and others are right now."

Gantz himself thought he was the one who caused the alarm to go off and unexpectedly paled.

We quickly returned back to the room everyone was waiting in and waited for the alarm to stop ringing, but there was no sign of that happening.

Gantz who was listening to what's happening beyond the door relayed what's happening outside.

"...It kinda looks like they're searching rooms one by one, there's the sound of doors opening and footsteps sound of several people."

"Haah, to think there was a trap like that..."

Taku held his forehead and sighed, making me inquire.

"Got any idea what's this about, Taku?"

"We opened a lot of rooms to gather information, but there was a mechanism that made the alarm sound if a certain number of doors is unlocked."

A mechanic that kills everyone on the first time, Taku said.

Meanwhile, Gantz listening to the situation in the corridor said that the NPCs were gradually getting close to the room.

Resolving himself when hearing Gantz's report, Taku scowled and took out an item from his inventory.

It was a reward for the quest we have completed in First Town's library's basement.

An item said to be the treasure of knowledge——【Oracle Orb】.

Taku pulled out an item that gave hints when questioned and asked a question.

"——『Tell me how do we get out of this pinch!』"

It was the first time I saw 【Oracle Orb】 being used, the shining orb turned into particles of light and responded mechanically.

『"——Escape is in the corridor's dead-end."』

With just those words, the particles of light disappeared leaving us astounded at the sight.

"Yun, show me the plan!"

"G-got it!"

I spread out the hand-drawn plan, showing it to Taku.

Surrounding the plan we compared the first and second floor's plans to find the location specified by the hint.

It was a dead end behind a crossing to the right outside of this room.

"At this rate we'll be found. Let's go to the hallway and head to the dead-end!"

Everyone nodded hearing Taku's instructions and prepared in front the door.

Then at Gantz's signal we all ran outside.

『"YOU, where did you come FROM?!"』

One deformed NPC has approached us, but the moment we leaped out of the room Gantz had thrown the throwing needles to buy us some time so that we could run down the corridor.

At the crossing we looked to the sides, the left side led to the veranda and on the right there was a big door that was guarded by two deformed NPCs.

The two NPCs who were on alert had come running in haste when they saw us.

"As if we'd let ourselves get caught! ——【Clay Shield】!"

When we reached the dead end of the corridor I turned around and spread Magic Gems to create a triple earthen wall that would stop the NPCs.

Although the NPCs were blocked by the wall, we could immediately hear the sound of the wall being shaved off from the other side. We were completely driven into a corner.

With the 【Oracle Orb】's hint to go by we desperately searched the spot.

"Found something?! Anything?!"

Taku looked around the dead-end but it was an empty space just like it was on the first floor.

However, what if there was a meaning behind this empty space?

I took out the plan I drew and compared the space with the first floor's plan.

By counting steps I compared it to the first floor and found out it was slightly shorter.

And when I focused on it, I felt a slight, tiny response from my 【See-Through】 Sense.

"Over here, Taku! There's space behind this wall!"

"Here...? This wall?! But how do we enter it?!"

Knocking on the wall I pointed to, Taku ascertained there was a difference in the sound, but we didn't know how to enter it.

"Taku! Try asking the 【Oracle Orb】 one more time!"

Kei delivered a body blow to the wall and raised his voice. Taku tried pushing against the wall the same way and also replied loudly.

"I only had one of those!"

Gantz examined the wall with the assistance of his 【Trap Disarm】 Sense but couldn't find anything.

While we grew impatient because of the sound of the wall behind us being brought down, Minute, Mami-san and I moved away from the other three and looked for something else. That's when Mami-san found something.

"Hm...? Something's weird."

She pointed with her finger towards the candlesticks arranged at even intervals in the hallway. For some reason just one of them was turned around 90° and pointed horizontally.

I carefully touched the candlestick and turned it back to the correct position.

When I did— —along with a clicking sound, the wall Taku and others were pressing against had turned to the side.

"It opened! Everyone jump in!"

Taku jumped into the hidden door without checking whether there's any trap inside, Gantz, Kei and others followed him.

This wall looks like a ninja mansion's hidden door, I thought as I entered the passage together with Minute and Mami-san. The wall turned completely and returned to its original state.

After that I heard another clicking sound and the wall had affixed itself in place.

At the same time on the other side of the wall, the enemy NPCs destroyed the wall made from Magic Gems and searched the dead-end, but soon enough I could hear their footsteps fade away as they left.



"Phew, that was close. Who the heck was it that thought up of a trap that rings the alarm when you open too many doors."

"That'd be OSO's development team. Haah, kill on first look joke, huh."

Hearing an exchange of words between Gantz and Minute after we somehow slipped away from the NPCs I put up a weak, bitter smile.

When we calmed down a little, we found a crystal ball that worked as a viewing hole that allowed us to look what's going on outside and confirmed there was no enemy that followed us. The alarm also stopped ringing.

"I guess we're safe for now."

I muttered that, and with the help of the light ball created by Minute's light magic, I investigated the surroundings. On the other side of the hidden door there was a room with simple furnishings and a passage continuing to the back.

Then, Taku found a piece of old paper on the table in the room and made a fearless smile.

"The main item for this hidden room is this."

Seeing the content included on paper I opened my eyes wide.

"Is that a plan of the entire mansion?! And it's complete, too!"

I compared it with the plan that I made.

I intended to draw mine quite accurately, but there were hidden rooms on the first floor that I failed to find.

And what was amazing about this hideout, was that this hidden room was leading to other rooms.

Of course it led to the first floor rooms, but also to the guard's veranda room, corridor, and there was even a hidden door leading to the big room on the second floor that was end point of the quest.

"Haah, to think we'd find an item like this. My sketch is inaccurate in comparison."

"What are you talking about, yours has plenty value too."

"No no, Yun-san! It might be incomplete, but distances and such are easy to

grasp!"

"Kei, Mami, thanks for cheering me up."

Kei furrowed his eyebrows and Mami-san spoke hurriedly as they both tried to cheer me up, but I put up a faint smile as I responded so. However, everyone looked at me strangely.

"Rather, there's few players who are even able to make a plan this correctly."

Saying so, Taku pat my back to cheer me up so I responded with displeasure.

"As if, anyone could do this if they want to. All you need is paper and pen... mm? You guys can't make one?"

I tilted my head and asked everyone, but they all responded by shaking their heads sideways.

"If there's anyone who can do it, it would be the few completionists who verify everything. Right now, the 【Eight Million Gods】 guild is training players to be able to create maps so that they can efficiently complete the unsearched areas."

Learning something new at this point, I felt two new emotions appear inside of me.

First was happiness, that my cartographic ability was necessary for the quest and was a highly evaluated player skill. Second, was that to use it I would have to actively take part in exploring new unsearched areas and quests, which was against my style of playing at my own pace.

"Heck, Yun, why do you have such map-making skills in the first place?"

"It's your fault! You made me help you out with a game that had no auto-mapping function!"

"Ohhh, back then!"

There was a time when Taku was into high-difficulty games, and after he bought an old one somewhere he made me help him with completing it.

While Taku was repeatedly dying in the retro game, I did my school homework and at the same time, I did mapping and took notes on items and

NPC conversations.

"Yes yes, while I am curious about your story, I think we should continue with the quest."

"Whoa?! You're right!"

Reminded by Minute, I recalled what we were supposed to be doing and returned the floor plans to Taku.

"For now let's move into the back of the room that's guarded. It doesn't seem like there are any traps in the way."

Taku moved in front while checking the plan.

We still haven't made sure there aren't any traps, I thought and advanced with caution making sure there aren't any traps with my 【Sky Eyes】 and 【See-Through】.

After advancing for a while, we were safely able to move behind the guarded room, and Taku used the crystal ball to confirm the situation inside when we approached the hidden door. We listened attentively.

『"What are you doing! We're right before an important ritual!"』

『"MY apoloGIES. FOUNDER."』

After hearing a man shouting, we heard the voice of NPC apologizing.

『"Not only have you failed to abduct a maiden of high blood, which is necessary for the ritual, you even allowed the mansion to be infiltrated and then let them escape. At this rate, it will not go as planned."』

The man called "founder" spoke to himself in frustration, before taking a deep breath to calm himself.

『"Mm, very well. Even without a sacrifice, there's plenty of possessed believers inside the mansion. We should be able to summon a high-class devil if we make use of the malice that this mansion has been filled with."』

"Hey, usually such plan modifications are flags for either failure or the whole thing going berserk."

Everyone smiled wryly as they heard Gantz's mutter, but we continued

listening to what the Founder was saying in order to gather as much quest information as possible.

『"I will be heading to the ritual site now. Have all possessed believers, with exception of guards, gather in the eatery on the first floor and offer their malice. I will suck it into the dance hall on the second floor and commence the summoning ritual."』

"UnderSTOOD, FounDER."

With that said, the subordinate guy appeared to have left the room.

『"Kukuku, now, I need to start preparing the ritual."』

And Founder also left the room.

Taku, who was looking at the situation inside the room told us what's going on inside.

"There's no one inside. Also, if what the guy said earlier is true, all the deformed NPCs inside the mansion should be gathering in the eatery on the first floor. Does that mean that we're able to move around freely?"

"No, the deformed NPCs that are patrolling might have been replaced with normal Cultist NPCs instead. However, we did learn where the ritual will take place."

According to Taku's map, the dance hall was above the eatery on the Eastern side of the first floor. Also, since the the hidden passage led all the way there, we could go to the ritual site directly.

But, before that——

"Take——what we can take."

Along with Taku's words we opened the hidden door and entered the unguarded room to ransack it.

"It sure feels like I'm being infected by you guys. Ah, Taku, that drawer has a double bottom so leave it to Gantz."

"Got it. Gantz, take care of it."

Taku and Gantz found a small hole on the back side of the drawer with the

double bottom, and after inserting a needle in there, they pushed from below to find a hidden jewelry box that Taku put in his inventory without even checking its contents.

"Hey, Kei. Since we don't have time to open it, help me destroy the safe that I found hidden behind the bookshelf here."

"Got it. HNGH!"

Minute and Kei broke a toolbox-looking metal box with their mace and sword, and then collected the items that were inside.

I was also looking around the room together with Mami-san, and we found expensive looking accessories, jewelry, items that seemed like they would sell for a lot, and pure money.

Looking at this objectively, it would be hard to tell which side are the villains, but I ignored that and we were able to recover the items without taking too much time.

It appeared that this was an important room in the hideout, so we gathered not just information but also nice items. Leaving the item check for later, we headed back to the hidden passage and reached the dance hall that had been turned into the ritual site.

"Looks like the ritual has already started."

Just like with the other hidden doors, when we looked inside through the crystal ball placed beside it, we could see cultists and deformed NPCs with their backs turned to us.

Ahead of the NPCs, there was a magic circle shaped like a five-pointed star on the dance floor. In the circle's center was a devil's statue made out of black stone that had a stern expression on its face.

The Founder NPC was chanting some kind of spell. Standing beside him were two deformed NPCs who were acting as escorts, and they had purple smoke rising from them. Moreover, the same purple smoke was also rising from beneath the floor of the room and gathering at the magic circle.

"So that's the malice thing. All right, we'll rush in and render the two unable

to move, then go after the Founder guy to finish the quest."

Everyone nodded in response to Taku's words and he put a hand on the hidden door.

"Let's go——"

He opened the door along with the signal that he gave in a low voice and we sprinted out into the dance hall.

"《Enchant》——Attack, defense, speed!"

While Taku, Gantz and Kei rushed towards the deformed NPCs, I applied triple enchants on them from behind.

Taku, who had passed through the room in a swoop, slashed one of the deformed guard NPCs before the enemy could react, rendering him unable to move.

Following that, we made our move in the rear guard before the other NPC could move.

"HAaa——《Aero Cannon》!"

"——《Mud Pool》!"

Mami-san's invisible cannon blew away the second NPC and I created a pool of mud at the place of his landing to stop him in his tracks.

Kei stood on top of the fallen deformed NPC to avoid receiving the mud's influence and stabbed his sword into the NPC's neck, cutting his head off.

"We finished off the guards, now for the Founder!"

Seeing the two guards beaten, the Founder opened his eyes in surprise.

If we beat this guy, we'll be able to stop the ritual and destroy the cultists' hideout. I thought.

However, purple smoke started to blow from the bodies of the deformed NPCs we had defeated, which was then absorbed by the magic circle.

"Kh-hahaha!! So with their hosts destroyed, the low-class devils left the bodies and became sacrifices for the ritual! With this I have the materials to

summon an even greater devil!"

The quest progressed along with the Founder's delighted declaration.

——【CQuest - Devil Cultists' Hideout Destruction】——

Eliminate the summoned devil—— 4／4

Since the previous stage of the quest involved intruding upon the ritual, the devil being summoned was probably the default route for this quest.

The five-pointed magic circle sucked in the purple smoke filling the dance hall and its mysterious shine rapidly grew brighter. It appears like it has granted power to the black stone devil statue in the center of the hall.

And——

『"KUOOOooOonnn!"』

The black statue suddenly twisted its torso, spread its wings, and roared as it raised its claws.

"FUHAHAHAHA!! The ritual was a success! Go, gargoyle! Eliminate those intruders to start with!"

The Founder swung his arm and commanded the moving statue to attack us.

The statue flapped its stone wings and leaped between Taku and the Founder.

"Gargoyles are usually small fries in games. What about you?!"

Taku skillfully swung around his two swords to continuously slash at the statue with a devil inside of it, but it repelled his attacks. It looks like the possession had made the statue even harder.

"Khh! His HP isn't going down at all!"

"I'm next! If slashes don't work, maybe blunt attacks will!"

Slipping behind the gargoyle, Gantz kicked the base of its wings and then struck it with his fist, but he ended up suffering damage from the recoil instead.

"OWWwww!!"

"C'mon, what are you doing. ——《High Heal》!"

Gantz's HP was healed thanks to Minute's recovery magic, but neither Taku nor Gantz were able to deal any damage to the gargoyle.

Then, the gargoyle who was not fazed by their attacks turned towards Kei for unknown reason, Kei raised his shield vigilantly.

『"KUOooON——"』

The devil spread its wings and charged with its body low, nearly sliding on the floor before striking the shield from the front.

"Kei! ——《Aero Cannon》!"

Mami-san fired her invisible cannon right after the gargoyle's attack, but its extra-hard body of stone repelled the spell.

In addition to being resistant to physical attacks such as slashing and blunt attacks, it was also resistant to Mami-san's magic. Seeing that, everyone moved away from the gargoyle. Taku voiced his analytic opinion on the gargoyle's abilities.

"His defense is way too high. It would take several hours to beat him with normal attacks, and our weapons would break long before that. There must be some kind of special mechanic to beating him, either time or some condition."

"In any case, I'll defend the rear guard."

"All right, leave it to me to buy us time. Rather, let's beat the Founder NPC first if we can."

While preparing a plan, Taku raised his two swords. Kei stood in front of the rear guard with his shield up and Gantz did some hops on the spot to calm himself down.

"C'mon, let's go!"

"" ——Yeah!!""

The three rushed out with Taku's shout as the signal. As long as we don't find the mechanic to beat the gargoyle, the possibility of our defeat will continue to

rise. Despite that, the way the three happily rushed at the gargoyle made me, Minute and Mami-san put up wry smiles.

"Well, let's try attacking from a distance with magic."

"Agreed, we can't leave everything to the vanguard!"

Minute and Mami-san also displayed their eagerness to fight as they prepared their spells.

Matching that, I weakened the gargoyle.

"《Cursed》——Defense, mind!"

"Go! ——《Light Shoot》!"

"——《Flame Circle》!"

The gargoyle, weakened by my Cursed spells, received Minute's bullet and the attack from Mami-san's converging flames.

However, the gargoyle was intact even after receiving those two magic attacks. Taku's slashes that had the purpose of preventing the gargoyle's counter-attacks didn't damage it either.

Mami-san used magic attacks of various elements to check if there was any difference in the damage dealt, but all of the attacks only dealt a small amount of damage.

"I can't deal high damage like Taku or Mami-san, but I'll try as well!"

Raising my spirits, I released an arrow with a bad status effect synthesized into it, but it was repelled by the gargoyle's body.

If it's going to be like this, we have no choice but to aim at the Founder who gave the gargoyle its orders.

"Taku! Aim for the Founder! Check how it reacts!"

"Well, if the gargoyle is this resistant to attacks, we can only beat the guy controlling it! Let's go Gantz!"

Taku ignored the gargoyle that was locked in frontal combat with Kei, and aimed for the Founder who was standing behind it.

Noticing that, the Founder issued a new order to the gargoyle.

"Gargoyle! Protect me!"

『"KUOOOON!"』

Distancing itself from Kei against whom it was engaged, the gargoyle jumped and glided with its stone wings in order to slip in between Taku and Gantz.

A normal enemy would have just focused on the player with the highest hate value, but the gargoyle was prioritizing its attacks under a different set of principles, making it a hard enemy to fight against.

The gargoyle stood so that it could protect the Founder, using its high defense to withstand any attacks before delivering heavy blows in response.

Also, since the gargoyle's movements were agile, it crushed any of Taku and Gantz's attempts at activating Arts. Moreover, while it defended itself against any kind of melee attack that was used against it, it also stood in the line of fire between the ranged attackers and the Founder, protecting him with its body.

"What about this? Will this make you attack us?!"

Minute, Mami and I aimed for the Founder who was behind the gargoyle's back, but it freely manipulated its stone wings to block the long ranged attacks, not allowing any damage to be dealt to the NPC.

In addition, since the gargoyle was now far away from Kei, and the Founder staying behind it took even more distance himself, there was a need to redo the positioning.

"Damn, how about this!"

At such a time, Gantz desperately threw something at the Founder, but it was blocked by the gargoyle's wing.

However, that action would become a trigger for finding out the mechanics of this boss battle.



"This isn't working. No matter what we try, we can't beat this gargoyle."

Even after repeatedly attacking the gargoyle's stone body, it had endured the attacks and we weren't able to shave even 10% of its HP off. It also had wings and could move around freely, so even if I created a mud pool on the dance hall's floor, it could easily slip out of it.

Other than that, we also tried doing things like dropping a chandelier on it to stop its movements, as well as checking the magic circle and items in the surroundings for hints. However, we couldn't find anything that might help us beat it. And when we were nearly out of ideas—my eyes stopped on it.

"...What's that?"

Something was pierced into the gargoyle's stone wing. It was extremely thin and looked unreliable, but it had pierced through the wing that was as durable as iron.

"Is that a needle...?"

It was one of the synthesized throwing needles with a bad status effect that I had passed to Gantz.

"Are piercing attacks working? No, my arrows didn't pierce him, so that's not it. Then what...?"

Using 【Sky Eyes】 to its fullest, I looked for a way to beat the boss. And what I found was——

"...I see, a special effect based on what material was used for the weapon."

Among the throwing needles that I gave to Gantz, the ones made out of iron have fallen on the floor, but the golden throwing needles have pierced its stone body.

Speaking of which, we found a large amount of weapons made of gold on the first floor.

And on top of that, gold was also used for candlesticks, chandeliers and weapons that were decorating the walls.

"Let's use this thing to confirm it."

It was a golden arrow that was among the weapons we found on the first floor,

and the only one I had left in my inventory. I thought there was no point to it since it was impractical, but now I nocked it on my bow and aimed for the gargoyle.

"《Enchant》——Attack, speed!"

Aiming for the middle of the gargoyle who had yet to take any evasive action so far, I pulled the string of the bow.

"——《Bow Skill - Arrow Stitching》!"

The golden arrow that was empowered by the Art flew straight through the dance hall and approached the gargoyle, which was currently locked in combat with Taku.

Sensing the golden arrow approaching it, the gargoyle took an action it had not taken before and distanced itself from Taku and the others.

"It... avoided the attack?"

While Taku was astounded when he saw the gargoyle's strange behavior, I shouted.

"His weakness is golden weapons! Just like silver works well against undead, golden weapons are effective against him!"

Once the Art's delay time ended, I immediately aimed at the gargoyle and released another arrow.

However, even with the increased hit rate from my high dexterity, my arrows were avoided by the gargoyle, who was able to fly freely within the dance hall.

"Golden weapons might deal direct damage, but they need to directly hit it, right? This won't help us at all if he flies around and avoids us!"

Minute kept firing her magic at it after changing her weapon to a bourgeois mace, but it dealt no damage to the gargoyle even when it hit.

Apparently, just like Minute said, the golden weapons' special effect would only work with direct weapon attacks.

Minute and Mami-san's long ranged attacks weren't working, and the vanguard couldn't reach the gargoyle since it was flying in the sky.

"Yun! Aim for the Founder! The gargoyle will definitely protect him, so let's use that!"

"Got it!"

When I changed the arrow's aim from the gargoyle that was flying indoors to the Founder, the gargoyle realized that and entered the line of fire as fast as possible in order to protect the NPC.

And when the golden arrow pierced the gargoyle's stone body, it dealt the highest damage so far, though the gargoyle still had over 90% of his HP.

"All right, it's our turn!"

Taku and Kei changed to golden swords and slashed at the gargoyle that had landed on the ground, but it quickly escaped.

We managed to find a way to beat the boss, but it still wasn't enough.

"Hey, Yun-chan. Do you have any golden tools I could use?"

"Usable golden tools, huh... I'm sorry to say that, aside from the arrows, I melted everything we got yesterday down and remade them into ingots..."

"Then, could you show me an ingot if you have one on you?"

Although I wondered what it was that she came up with, I took out a Gold Ingot that I had in my inventory and handed it to Minute.

After receiving it, Minute checked its size and weight with her thin arms, and then nodded.

"Can you put a physical attack enchant on me, Yun-chan? Also, I'll be borrowing this gold ingot for a moment."

"Eh? Ah, sure. 《Enchant》——Attack."

Although I was still wondering what this was about, I gave her the enchant that she asked for. Minute then switched her weapon from the bourgeois mace that she was holding to a heavy-looking mace made out of Black Iron.

And then, after posing like a batter, she threw the heavy gold ingot into the air and swung the mace with both of her hands.

"Hey!! What?!"

The swung mace splendidly captured the Gold Ingot, sending it flying towards the Founder while rotating due to the air resistance.

And when the gargoyle stood in front of the NPC to protect him, the ingot pierced its belly.

"Actually, a spherical ball would be best, but this is nice in a way. Supply me with bullets, Yun-chan!"

"Ah, I'll do it too! Let's do this! ——《Coin Toss》!"

As he said that, Gantz's eyes sparkled as he threw the things he had in his hand at the Founder with a snap of his wrist.

The things he was throwing were G coins, which flew like shuriken and pierced the gargoyle's stone body.

Although Mami-san and I were taken aback by the sight of Gantz and Minute throwing Gold Ingots, money and other golden items at the enemy, we immediately removed the golden items in our inventories in order to replenish their throwing ammunition.

Fortunately, there was plenty of ammo since the Founder had gold coins in his room.

Eventually, an innumerable number of Gold Ingots and coins were stuck to the stone gargoyle's body, causing it to be covered in cracks.

"Hlllllhh!! Gargoyle! Protect, protect mee!"

The Founder screamed miserably, but well, I can understand that having Gold Ingots and coins thrown at yourself does sound like a nightmare. I thought. A Gold Ingot thrown by Minute pierced the base of the gargoyle's stone wing, causing it to break off and fall to the floor.

As a result, the gargoyle was forced to descend to the ground as it had lost its ability to fly, allowing Taku to go on the offensive.

"Now, let's go!"

"Yeah——《Shield Bash》!"

When struck by Kei's golden shield, the cracks on the gargoyle's body

continued to spread and its movements were stopped.

And the instant the gargoyle was knocked back, Taku poised his sword.

"——《Shock Impact》!"

When this slashing sword Art was used by Taku, the gargoyle's left arm finally collapsed.

『"KUOoooON!"』

The gargoyle swung its right arm as if to show it was still eager to fight, but this time it was blocked by Kei's sword, which caused the boss' right wrist to crumble due to the golden weapon's special effect.

"This will end it! ——《Power Buster》!"

Taku's long sword, which was swung down from overhead, cut away the gargoyle's remaining HP, causing the entire statue to collapse.

With that, we finally managed to defeat the devil statue.

"Ahhh, the devil we summoned..."

The founder muttered in delirium as he looked at the statue.

"That'd be the quest cleared."

While saying that, Taku turned away from the gargoyle's remains. Immediately afterwards, purple smoke rose up from the debris.

"Taku! Behind you!"

"?!! Whoa, a two stage battle?"

He turned around and started stepping backwards as he raised his sword again.

What appeared from the smoke, was a translucent devil-like spirit with long fangs and claws.

"Ohh! The devil's existence doesn't disappear even after the host has been destroyed! Now, go on! Kill them!"

The Founder rejoiced at the sight of the ominous devil appearing again and tried to give it orders, but the devil looked over its shoulder at him and

breathed in deeply as if to fill its chest——

"Ghhh, the painn! No way, you're...! I summoned you, yet you're taking my soul...?! GAHHH!!"

Something white, appearing to be a soul, slipped out of the Founder's mouth and was sucked into the ghost devil's mouth.

The deformed NPC guards that had fallen on the floor had small purple souls pulled out of their bodies and sucked into the devil's mouth as well.

In addition to that, there were small purple souls springing out from under the floor, which were probably coming from the eatery below. These souls were jumping into the devil's mouth one after another in the same manner as those from the guards.

"Hey, the deformed NPCs are returning to normal."

"Which means the problem is just the second boss."

Gantz noticed the sudden change to the deformed NPCs, but hearing Taku's analysis, we judged that the dead NPCs were no longer a threat. With that, we looked up and focused on the devil spirit.

After sucking in all the lower devils that were possessing the deformed cultists, the devil spirit's semi-transparent body was filled with ominous colors, showing that it had been filled with strength——and then, the 【Devil Geist】 looked down on us while smiling sadistically.

"He's coming!"

Seeing through enemy's actions with my 【See-Through】 Sense, I gave the party a warning. With that, everyone switched back to their original weapons and started moving.

Immediately after that, the devil spirit spread his arms to the sides and started manipulating the objects inside of the dance hall.

Objects such as golden candlesticks, pots, paintings, and swords rose up into the air before showering us from above..

"That gargoyle didn't have any ranged attacks, but this guy uses magic! ——《Sonic Edge》!"

While running to avoid the objects manipulated by the devil spirit, Taku activated a ranged Art.

His flying slash approached the devil, but the boss blocked it by using the objects around it as a shield.

"He blocked it, but the objects being used as shields disappear after they're attacked!"

The objects broken apart by Taku's slash turned into particles of light before they even fell to the ground and have disappeared. This meant that once the boss has no more objects to manipulate in the room, it wouldn't have anything to shield itself with.

"I'll use area of effect magic to clean up the room, then! ——《Down Burst》!"

Mami-san, who hadn't moved until now, unleashed the magic she had been accumulating.

A mass of air blew down as if it was going to crush the devil spirit from above. In response, the boss moved all the objects in the room to try and prevent it, where they were then struck down to the floor one after another, disappearing after they turned into particles of light. Finally, the devil spirit itself was pressed down onto the ground.

Still, none of us thought that it was defeated.

Kei quietly positioned himself in front of Mami-san and raised his shield in order to protect her.

"Yun!"

"《Enchant》——Defense, mind!"

Responding to his call, I put a double defensive enchant on Kei.

The next instant, a black sphere jumped out from the fingertip of the fallen devil spirit, targeting Mami-san who had gathered a lot of hate with her 《Down Burst》.

Kei, who was standing in the line of fire, held his shield in front and repelled the attack.

Before the black sphere had returned to the devil spirit, it jumped up and escaped.

Aiming for that moment, Minute, Gantz and I attacked it all at once.

"《Element Enchant》——Weapon. ——《Magic Bow Skill – Phantom Arrow》!"

I crushed a light elemental stone and enchanted my bow with the light element, then released a silver arrow.

Following it, five magic arrows were created from the trail left by the silver arrow and overtook it, assaulting the devil spirit's body.

All five of the magic arrows pierced the boss' limbs from different angles, and the silver arrow that lagged behind pierced its chest.

"Take this——《Angel Ring》!"

A shining ring was released from the mace that Minute was raising up high. This ring restrained the devil spirit's body that was drifting in the air and had just received my arrow, forcing it to fall to the ground.

"Go, Gantz!"

"Leave it to me! ——《Multiple Kick》!"

The moment the restrained devil was about to fall onto the floor, Gantz slipped beneath it and delivered several heavy blows to its body.

Even from a distance, the sounds of his attacks were loud enough for me to hear. As the attack was repeated two to three times, the devil restrained by the Angel Ring spell had been turned into a sand bag floating in mid-air.

"Now, for a combo finish!"

Gantz blew away the devil spirit with a powerful roundhouse kick. Ahead of where the devil was sent, Taku crossed his long swords he held in his both hands, ready to cut the boss down. 『"GAAaAaaa."』

"——《Cross Execution》!"

The slashes cut the devil spirit's body like scissors, splitting it apart. The cut body parts passed by on both sides of Taku, turned into particles of light and disappeared.

Then, a white soul-thing which had remained after the boss was defeated flew straight towards the fallen Founder NPC's mouth.

After that, once all of the boss' remains had completely disappeared, we were able to confirm the quest's completion in the menu.

"Phew, it was so-so for the second stage's boss. Heck, wasn't it actually weak? The gargoyle was stronger than this."

"Nonono, I think that this was quite the difficult battle as is."

I strongly denied Taku's mutter, making everyone laugh with vague expressions.

While it's certainly true that its strength was set quite modestly considering it was a continuous boss battle, I still don't think it can be considered "weak". I thought that, but then I recalled something.

Oh right, Taku's party members are all top class OSO players.

For such players, a simple magic-based boss like 【Devil Geist】 would be much easier than the gargoyle, which requires you to discover a special mechanic in order to defeat it.

"Well, it looks like the quest is finished with this."

The sound of footsteps could be heard in the corridor and then the door opened towards us.

From the entrance, Guard NPCs wearing armor flowed into the dance hall and captured the Founder and the NPCs who used to be deformed.

"I am the commander of this town's guard troops. I would like to thank you for your cooperation with destroying the Devil Cultists' Hideout. Although your direct client is the nobleman, I would like to once again thank you for plucking the buds of disturbance we had in the town."

After saying that, the Guard Commander NPC gave an order to one of the Guard NPCs, who then gave each of us a leather bag.

"This is the reward that your client, the nobleman, had left with us. Now, please excuse us, but we have to deal with the aftermath."

The guards disappeared all at once and we opened the bags that were passed to us. Inside the bag was the quest reward of 20 Quest Chips, as well as a mysterious reward that was marked as 【???】.

It was——

Tattoo of Samsara【Accessory】 (Weight: 1)

Additional Effect: HP Recovery Increase (Medium), HP Recovery Restriction Decrease

There was a silver sticker that looked like an angel's feathers on the slippery and hard paper.

"What's this? Are tattoos treated as accessories?"

"Heeh, it's like a sticker. Interesting."

Saying so, Minute immediately tried wearing the reward item. Because the sticker was a unique accessory, it was apparently possible to stick it anywhere on your body.

It appeared it could be used repeatedly, so she tried putting it on her cheek, and on the back of her hand and other places.

"The HP Recovery Increase means that it's perfect for me!"

Minute was really happy that she received an accessory that's well suited for her, and she finally decided to put the sticker on her shoulder.

"How is it?"

She asked, showing her shoulder to me. I answered.

"I think it looks good. Though, it's a little disappointing that it's hidden under the winter clothes."

"True, but if it can't be seen then it means that no one will know that I have it, which will give me an advantage in PvP."

Minute replied.

Afterwards, we looked around the mansion to try and collect some more items, but—

"It looks like the Guard NPCs collected everything as evidence. There are no items left here!"

"Well, we can't do anything about that. If that's how it works, then gathering the items from around the mansion must have been one of the main elements of this quest."

Taku smiled wryly as he patted Gantz's shoulder when the latter cried out at the lack of items to gather.

Dragging Gantz with us as he lamented over the items we may have missed, we consulted each other on how we would split the items we have acquired during this quest.

The items that would sell for a large amount of money would be sold and then the money would be split between us. Useful items would be picked out and given to the one who'll make the most use of it, and unnecessary items would also be sold and distributed equally.

The fierce negotiations between Taku and the other members over some of the useful items took longer than the fight against the second stage of the boss.

I set my eyes on some accessories that could serve as references when I'm crafting with the 【Engraving】 Sense. Still, I wasn't so desperate to have them that I would negotiate to get them no matter what, so I mainly picked up some versatile and cursed accessories.

"Yun, are you really okay with these?"

"Well, they don't seem like they would be useful, but this kind of stuff is interesting."

Still, I DID think to myself that there's something wrong with me for picking cursed accessories just because "they're kinda interesting". In any case, just like that, the quest chain that started with us escorting a noble had come to an end.

In the end, we were able to clear the quest before the deadline we had set for ourselves, so it was a satisfying outcome.

Then, once everything was finished, Taku recalled something.

"Speaking of which, Yun."

"What is it?"

"Couldn't you have used your 【Sky Eyes】 and 【Earth Element Talent】 combo to blow up the Founder directly without allowing the gargoyle to get in the way?"

""——Ah.""

Everyone, including me, had forgotten all about that.

The fact that I didn't think of this method of attack even though I possessed it left me feeling slightly depressed.

Chapter 5 - Magic Potions and the End-of-the-Year Party

With a week remaining in the winter quest event, I have already acquired the 50 Quest Chips that I had set as my goal, and was now the owner of 70 chips. With my goal achieved, I started visiting Obaba's pharmacy again since I could now take my time learning the new recipes.

"Hey, don't you make an old woman wait like that!"

"Fufufu, that's what granny says, but she's actually happy to see you."

Obaba the pharmacist and her granddaughter welcomed me with these words.

I smiled wryly, had Ryui and Zakuro wait by the store's counter, and then entered the workshop in the back.

There, I accepted the three remaining Mixing quests that I have yet to complete.

【Magic Potion: Echo Liquid (5)】——2 Quest Chips

【Magic Potion: Flash Liquid (5)】——2 Quest Chips

【Magic Potion: Blinding Liquid (5)】——2 Quest Chips

Obaba stood beside me and explained the new recipes.

"Each of these magic potions are made by Curse makers in each region and they originally have their own regional names as well. The materials used differ in each region, but they all have similar effects."

She said that as she pulled out two materials, Aero Snake's Scales and a new type of herb called **【Magi-Scream Grass】**.

"Are these materials all there is to it?"

"Indeed. That's why making these potions is the job of Curse makers. Just watch."

With that said, she heated up the Aero Snake's Scales until they had been dried, ground them into powder, added dried Magi-Scream Grass, and then added water.

Finally, she used the 【MP Bestowal】 EX-Skill just like she would for Mega Potions and MP Pots.

The skill turned the muddy potion into a bright green liquid.

Magic Potion: Echo Liquid 【Consumable】

Wind Damage (minimal), Additional Effect: Paralysis

After Obaba showed the procedure to me, thanks to which I was able to understand the basics.

"See, these are magic potions that use the elemental power within monsters. And this, this is our region's common magic potion."

"Hmm. Well, let's try making some first."

First off, I started by making 【Magic Potion: Echo Liquid】 according to Obaba's procedure.

I made five portions of the original liquid at once and used 【MP Bestowal】 on each of them, one by one. They weren't difficult to craft.

The crafting method was very similar to how I make Enchant Stones. Though, recently I have been using a combination of 【Sky Eyes'】 《Zone》skill and 《Skill Enchant》 to make multiple of them at once.

With the work done, Obaba received the potions I had quickly made and started examining them.

It looked like she dipped some kind of test paper into the potions and tried a drop from each one.

Was she examining the potion's effectiveness? I thought, then spoke to her.

"Can I try making some with my own method?"

"I don't mind, but I WILL take money for the Magi-Scream Grass."

With that said, I arranged materials with a wry smile while Obaba was still checking the first five 【Echo Liquids】 beside me.

The materials I used were Magi-Scream Grass, Aero Snake's Scales and Fairy Panther's Scales. The drop items from Fairy Panthers are also of the wind element, and I sometimes use them when I'm making 【Element Cream】.

First, I crushed the two wind element drop items. Then, I mixed them with dried grass and added water to make the solution.

Lastly, I passed it through a clean cloth and into a bottle——

"——【MP Bestowal】"

And finished the creation of the wind element 【Echo Liquid】 potion by activating the EX-Skill.

As a result, thanks to using a different method and materials than what Obaba, the new 【Echo Liquid】 was——

Magic Potion: Echo Liquid 【Consumable】

Wind Damage (weak), Additional Effect: Paralysis

It was just a little stronger than the magic potion made by Obaba the pharmacist.

If this was the case, then the item combinations that I thought were meaningless so far could now be used to make new potion recipes.

As I was thinking that, I opened my Mixing research notebook to a page with a list of materials and picked out other materials that could be used while I checking the completed potion's smell and color.

"Hmm, this color looks deeper than the original sample's."

Curious, I spilled a drop onto my finger and put it in my mouth.

And then, ended up groaning because of the horrible taste.

『”——Ughh...”』

It was supposed to be a faint groan, but my voice had been amplified and the moment it echoed in the room, the magic potion I was holding broke by itself.

"Hey! What're ya doing! Trying to break this place?!"

I was just trying to test this potion... heck, my voice is way too loud!

I tried to make an excuse after being scolded by Obaba, but I couldn't let my voice out so I put a hand on my throat.

"Dumbass! You use this potion on a weapon! It adds additional effects to weapons! You'd better drink some potions to cure your inborn stupidity!"

I see, so I received a penalty for using it in a way that was different from how it was originally meant to be used.

That means that this magic potion is the weapon version of my 【Element Cream】.

While 【Element Cream】 grants elemental resistance when it's applied to the skin, these magic potions will make elemental attacks possible if they're applied on weapons.

I came to that conclusion, then continued to receive scolding from Obaba for a bit longer until my voice finally recovered.

After some time, the broken potion bottle disappeared after turning into particles of light, and I was taught two more magic potion recipes. Obaba strictly warned me to make sure to take safety measures before I tested them out.

When all the work was over, I put the four 【Echo Liquid】 potions and 【Magi-Scream Grass】 that I received from Obaba into my inventory.

"There are no more recipes that I can teach you. Still, I'm a little worried about you, girl. You're really careless."

"I don't think my carelessness matters here. Also, I'm a man."

"Well, don't hesitate to come for help if something happens!"

As I thought, she ignored my talk of being a man! I grumbled in my heart.

However, when I was leaving the pharmacy with Ryui and Zakuro and was seen off by Obaba and her granddaughter, her anger was already gone and she looked somewhat happy.

And as I went around the NPC stalls searching for and buying materials that could be used to make magic potions, I did think that I'd like to go visit her again if there was something I needed. Just when I was thinking of heading back to 【Atelier】, I received a message from friend chat.

"Hm? Who is it...? Oh, it's Sei-nee."

It was an invitation to the Christmas and end-of-the-year party that was being held in the 【Eight Million Gods】 guild home, which Mikadzuchi had mentioned during the unveiling of Ryui's adult form.

Moreover, it was being held tonight.

The message said that the party will start at 8 o'clock in the evening. I looked at the clock and saw that I still had some time, but since I intended to bring some cakes with me, it would be better if I arrived early.

Following Sei-nee's message, there was a message from Myu requesting dinner early, so I logged out on the spot and had dinner with Miu.

After dinner, she logged into OSO again and went to meet up with Lucato and the others before going to the 【Eight Million Gods】 guild home, so I headed there on my own ahead of her.

At the entrance, I pulled out the golden free pass ticket for the 【Eight Million Gods】 guild and entered the white-walled and red-roofed mansion. They seemed to be at the final stages of their preparations for the party.

"C'mon, food's ready. Carry it out!" "There's no cake!" "Participants will bring some cakes! There's no need to make any!" "HEY, no food snatching!"

I stood there looking at the players who were moving busily, unable to find the timing to call out to anyone.

After wondering for a while about when I should step in and pass the cakes that I brought with me, I saw Sei-nee heading towards me.

"Welcome, Yun-chan. You're early."

"Oh, Sei-nee. Thanks for the invitation to the end-of-the-year and Christmas party. Also, here, the cakes."

As I said that, I handed to her more than ten strawberry cakes that I had made earlier, which she then passed to the few players who were in charge of the party's organization.

"So, what will you do, Yun-chan? Wait somewhere in the back for now?"

"Hmm, can I go to the second floor? I'll visit my acquaintances in the crafters' room."

"Alright. Well then, I'll call you when the party starts."

With Sei-nee's approval, I went up the guild home's stairs and knocked on the doors of the room where the crafters gathered.

"Can I intrude for a bit?"

"Mmm~? Oh, welcome."

"Oh, what's up?"

I looked towards Otonashi, who was looking at me with sleepy eyes as he drank tea, and Langley, who quietly raised his hand with a cheerful expression.

"Came to kill some time here until the party starts."

"Oh, I see. Wait a moment. I'll take out some tea and sweets."

"I'll pass on sweets, I guess. I just ate dinner a moment ago."

I refused Langley's consideration and sipped on the slightly-bitter green tea.

Afterwards, I exchanged information on crafting and the event quests with some crafters. Some of the crafters who listened to me immediately rushed out of the guild home.

I guess some of the quests that only appear when you have the specific Sense for it aren't that well-known, I thought, and I smiled bitterly as I continued to share quest information with the others.

As crafters, they had a lot of information about material collecting and errand quests, and I was also able to acquire information on some hidden quests that I didn't know about.

Since there was only a week left of the quest event, I probably won't be able to clear all of the quests they taught me about. However, I should do some of them when I have time.

Other than that, we talked a bit about crafting and the time passed quickly until I received a message from Sei-nee saying that the party was ready.

"Ah, looks like the preparations are done."

"Is that so. Have fun, then."

Hearing Otonashi answer me with a sleepy look in his eyes as I stood up from my seat, I looked at him questioningly.

"Hm? Aren't you two going too?"

"It's too noisy when there's so many people. That's why we snatched some appetizers and ran away to here."

Langley said that as he sipped some tea. I wish I could do the same, I thought with a wry smile. Still, I would probably stay at the party together with Myu and Sei-nee until the very end anyway; as I continued that thought, I laughed in self-derision.

And when I returned to the hall on the first floor, gathered there were Myu's and Taku's parties, Magi-san, Cloude and Lyly, as well as other acquaintances. They all had drinks in their hands.

I poured juice into a nearby cup as well and picked it up, then I looked up at Mikadzuchi who was standing atop a platform.



"Ehem, I really feel like drinking so let's get to it— —cheers!"

""""HEY!!""""

The guild master's signal for the start of the party was so out of place that retorts flew Mikadzuchi's way from all over. Also, Sei-nee, who was standing next to her, elbowed Mikadzuchi with a broad smile on her face. Mikadzuchi cleared her throat and resumed her speech.

"I hate long speeches so I'll make this quick—"

Hearing that prelude, all the players in the hall, including me, made bitter smiles as they listened to Mikadzuchi.

"It's been five months since OSO was officially released. Well, it might have seemed long, but it is actually quite a short amount of time. I got to know many players in that time, both directly and indirectly."

She spread her arms towards everyone in the hall.

"Wishing for our relations to continue, let's make this a great party!— Cheers!"

Mikadzuchi said that and raised her glass that was filled with alcohol. Following her, I raised my glass and drank some juice.

After that, the actual party started.

Mikadzuchi and Sei-nee walked around together, greeting the players who came to the party.

Myu's party, Minute, Mami-san and other female players were hanging around the sweets corner, eating cake. Quite feminine of them.

Taku, Gantz and Kei, as well as other male players were munching on meat and other heavy food.

Other than that, there were people who were only eating salads, those who were quietly drinking, and those who were stirring soba in broth.

Everyone's appearance as they ate far above the satiety limit made me smile wryly. In my case, I decided to balance the dishes I pick up.

In the place Cloude and others were at, Magi-san and Lyly had summoned their tamed mobs and were having a meal together.

"Oh, that looks tasty, Yun-kun!"

After collecting the food I wanted on my plate, I headed towards a seat near them. There, I heard Magi-san call out to me.

"Yeah, it feels like the cooks have improved since the last time I ate here."

Starting with the very basic fried young chicken, there were chicken wings

with boiled sweet potatoes, the usual fried chicken, and English-style fried chicken. There was a lot of fried chicken Christmas cuisine.

I also summoned my tamed mobs, Ryui and Zakuro, and then split some chicken from the bone to make it easier for them to eat.

"Ohh, there's plenty of garlic in this salad dressing. Wanna try some, Yun-kun?"

"This curry here is also really good. It's an original with fried chicken and pork cutlet on top of it. Look at this, Yuncchi!"

"Here, I asked Fiore, my store's pâtissiere, to make this mini-cake. Have some."

"Ahahaha... I'll take my time eating these."

Receiving dish recommendations from Magi-san, Lyly and Cloude, I put on a bitter smile and slowly started to eat.

Certainly, the things that those three recommended were delicious, and I gladly ate them together with Ryui and Zakuro.

After satisfying my appetite, I put Zakuro on my lap and talked with Magi-san and the others as I brushed him.

"Hee, Yun-kun, you partied-up with Taku-san's party and did a yet unfinished chain quest?"

"Yeah, it was very different from elimination quests and quite difficult."

I moistened my throat with juice and explained the quest bit by bit.

At first, Magi-san was also drinking juice, but as the party grew more lively she started to switch to a weak cocktail. And now, she's folded the fingertips of both her hands together and placed her chin on them as she listens to my story in a good mood.

"Fufufu, is that so."

"Then, at the end, we split the items we got between each other."

I got this, I said, and took out the various accessories I received as my share.

Among them was a slightly oppressive choker made out of black leather with

a silver chain. As the owner of a 【Craftsmanship】-type Sense, Magi-san became interested in it and picked it up with her hand to examine it.

"Heeh, a choker, huh. Heck, you picked up cursed equipment again, Yun-kun?"

"Ahahaha, correct."

I answered her question and then Cloude, who wasn't particularly surprised, drank some of his white wine and asked a question himself.

"So, what's this cursed accessory's effect?"

In response to his question, I visualized the item's detailed stats.

Death Count's Choker 【Accessory】 (Weight: 2)

INT+15, MIND+15 Additional Effect: 【Weakening】【HP Recovery Decrease】

It was magic-focused accessory with the demerit of applying 【Weakening】 to the wearer.

【Weakening】 was an effect that decreases the player's HP by 5% of their max HP at certain fixed intervals. In addition to that, the accessory also has the 【HP Recovery Decrease】 effect, which greatly decreases the amount of healing the wearer receives.

In other words, if you wear this accessory, not only will you gradually lose HP, but it makes the HP hard to recover as well. It's a loser's accessory.

"Well, I won't use it, but I thought it might have some connection to the quest's setting."

"Quest's setting?"

"The entire quest chain begins with the escort of an NPC that's been chosen to be sacrificed during a devil summoning ritual. And so, I wondered whether the cultists planned to use this item on the victim. It's interesting to think over possible settings and such."

The cursed accessory would increase the NPC's magical potential while

gradually weakening her, making her unable to resist. Thus, the ritual would be completed without fail.

It was also fun to think that as a result of players advancing the quest, the cultists were unable to make use of this accessory and it was left inside the mansion until you came to acquire it.

"Hmmm, that's one way to think of it I guess."

While thinking over the conversation, Magi-san sipped her alcohol and snacked on nuts-type sweets together with her partner, Ricœur.

With the conversation exhausted, Cloude tilted his wine glass slowly as he stroked Socks' back.

Looking sleepy, Lyly dazedly stared outside the window.

It was about time for underaged and tired players to start logging out, I thought. That's when Lyly suddenly muttered a word.

"...eh, Santa?"

Lyly, who saw something outside the window, quickly woke up from his dazed state and moved towards the door leading outside.

"Ah! I'll go after Lyly!"

"I'll come with you, the night wind is good for sobering up."

"So will I. I'm interested in what Lyly meant when he said "Santa"."

And as a result of searching for Lyly, we went outside onto the guild home's PvP grounds.

There, we found players enjoying alcohol to the sight of the snowy aura. Together with them was Lyly, who was looking up at the sky with a sparkle in his eyes.

I looked up at the night sky filled with white snow powder, and there I saw an erroneous existence flying over it.

After activating 【Sky Eyes】 to examine it, I stared at the existence.

『"Ho ho ho! Merry Christmas!"』

An old man in red clothes was flying in the sky while cheerfully laughing. He was skillfully manipulating the reindeers' reigns as he carried large bags full of presents.

"You serious? It's really Santa Claus."

Facing towards the town, Santa Claus waved his hand with a smile.

The players who were partying inside noticed his sudden emergence and rushed outside as well.

"——Santa Claus. I guess it IS Christmas time."

"Though, by investing yourself in the in-game Christmas event, it's like you're giving up on actual Christmas."

"That damn event dedicated to riajuus can go to hell! Damn it...!"

"I wish destruction for guys with girlfriends, amen. May riajuus face eradication, amen."

Looking towards Santa, some male players started performing suspicious religious rituals and chanting strange stuff.

And among the crowd, waving her hand with all her might——

"SANTAAA! Give me a preseeeent!"

"M-Myu-san! Please stop it, it's embarrassing!"

Was Myu, who was then stopped by Lucato.

Then, the game-brains Taku, Mikadzuchi and Cloude gathered and started deliberating about something.

"So, does Santa Claus' appearance have anything to do with the event? Speaking of which, there was an announcement before saying that there will be "a release of special mobs". Is this it?"

"I don't know, but even if Santa Claus is the special mob, would it really be all right to make him a target to capture?"

"Actually, I wouldn't want to do an event where we beat up a saint."

Hearing their conversation, I glared at them for saying stuff that kids shouldn't

hear. All three of them turned their faces away, avoiding my line of sight.

『"Ho ho ho! Ho? NOOOOOOOOOOOO——"』

Santa Claus, who was smiling as he flew through the night sky in his sleigh, was assaulted in mid-air by five deformed beings.

Those deformed creatures not only pulled away his treasures, but they also kicked Santa himself off of his sleigh.

Although Santa Claus somehow managed to land on the ground, each of the deformed creatures stole all the letters, the two reindeer, the sleigh, the gift bags, and his red hat. After which, they shouted.

"Noow! We have the saint's, Santa Claus' precious treasures! There will be no NO Christmas for this town and the children will DESPAIR! We devils shall use that despair to call forth the arch-devil Satan!"

The five devils that robbed Santa Claus of his precious tools and treasures flew straight outside of the town.

And then, when the devils that had left the town arrived on top of each of the five pentagrams that had been drawn on the ground, black light poured down from the sky.

——**Emergency quest 【Return of Santa Claus】 has been given to all players.**

From here on, please beat all five of the dungeons that have been created by the five 【Devils】. For each cleared dungeon, you will recover one of 【Santa Claus' Tools】.

When all five tools have been recovered, the Return of Santa Claus quest will be complete, and all players will receive a reward for completing the event.

Also, the difficulty of the 【Devils'】 dungeons will be influenced by the quest event's completion rate.

Current quest completion rate is——62%

"I'll go take a look!"

"M-me too!"

And so, a mass of players rushed outside the town all at once.

Light-bodied people like Myu kicked off the walls and left the town over the roofs of the buildings.

On the other hand, I avoided the crowd by moving on the very edge of it.

The end-of-the-year and Christmas party has pretty much been cancelled because of this huge fuss.

I, along with Magi-san and the other crafters, have decided to watch as things unfold for the time being and help out with the party cleanup in the 【Eight Million Gods】 guild home. Then, three hours later—— "Fufufu, we're done for. We don't stand a chance."

"The dungeon difficulty and mechanisms are just evil. This is one horrible Christmas present from the management."

"Merry Christmas, my ass! It's more like pure suffering!"

The five dungeons have beaten the countless challengers; it looks like they are more difficult than any normal dungeons that were currently available.

Each dungeon had its own characteristics.

The first one was focused on flames and the red hat——the Hearth Dungeon.

Other than tormenting players with hot air that blew through the brick-made passages at fixed intervals, and the entire dungeon was full of lethal traps as well.

Although it seems to be a mini-dungeon, there was no info about its actual size or the dungeon boss.

The second dungeon was focused on water and the reindeers——the Snowy Field Dungeon.

It was an open-field type dungeon that was filled with heavy blizzard-like conditions. Inside it, the players need to find the staircase that leads below. However, they will start to be slowly tormented by 【Cold Damage】 if they take too long in doing so.

There was no information about this dungeon's size or boss either.

The third dungeon was focused on wind and the letters——the Great Tree Dungeon.

There were no difficult mechanics like the hot air or snowstorm mentioned in the previous dungeons, but the respawn interval for MOBs was very short and no safe zone has been found so far. As a result, the continuous battles in this dungeon exhausted the players.

Several parties have reached the boss of this dungeon, but the boss, who calls himself the 【Devil of Magic】, perfectly counters melee attacks and continuously releases barrages of magic without rest. Apparently, it's a powerful magic-type boss that has no openings that would allow the players to beat him.

The fourth dungeon was focused on earth and the gift bags——the Graveyard Dungeon.

This was also an open-field dungeon like the Snowy Field Dungeon, but it had undead mobs that absorbed HP and MP.

The enemies had very low movement speed and individual fighting power, but they chased after the players forever because they had an incredibly high range of player detection.

Also, since the dungeon is an open field cemetery, the players' actions are obstructed by the tombstones and other similar objects that are scattered across the field. In addition, before the players realize it, the number of undead mobs grows to a level that they can't handle.

The boss, who called himself the 【Devil of Barriers】, has a large amount of HP and magic defense. Although he doesn't have any strong means of attacking himself, he can summon a large number of undead that will separate the players from him. He also uses powerful debuffs that decrease the players' stats and cause bad statuses.

And the last dungeon was focused on light and the sleigh——the Road Dungeon.

This dungeon was completely different from the others.



"The road dungeon features the boss battle right from the start. You fight the boss from a sled. It's one of those battles on the move that you can find in games, like the battles on moving vehicles like trucks. Although it's okay on the TV screen, it's incredibly difficult in VR."

Myu said and scowled.

At the moment, I had prepared some tea for the players who challenged the dungeons and then came back after dying, and was listening to their stories.

"On top of that, once you fall off the sled, you die and can't come back! Seeing as revival medicine doesn't work, this is the strangest dungeon of them all! Completely unreasonable!"

Frustrated at her defeat against the boss, Myu complained with a scowl. However, as she spoke, her face slowly began to fill with the glow of excitement for her next attempt.

"So, you know, the boss fight is carried out with around twenty auto-matched players that fight against 【Devil Brat】 and his eight Devil Reindeer subordinates. Although the reindeers aren't that strong themselves, they cooperate with the boss to drop players out of the dungeon. All of that is happening while our parties are having a hard time cooperating with each other as we travel at full speed on a sled!"

I nodded with affirmation towards what she said, and once Myu had said everything that she wanted to say, she drank her tea all at once.

"I received a death penalty in that dungeon, so I'm going to sleep for today. Good night!"

"Oh, good night."

I saw Myu off as she logged out ahead of me, and put away the cup that she drank tea from.

Taking a look around, I saw that the after-party cleanup was over and Sei-nee, Taku, Mikadzuchi and Cloude had gathered to talk about something.

And, noticing that I was alone, Mikadzuchi beckoned me over with her hand, making me wonder what she wanted.

"What is it? Need something from me?"

"So, Missy Yun, can you prepare 【Element Cream】 and 【Hot Drinks】? As many as possible."

"Ahh, for the Hearth and Snowy Field Dungeons, right?"

Hearing my answer, everyone nodded.

The 【Element Cream】 that temporarily gives 【Fire Element Resistance】 is necessary for the Hearth Dungeon's hot air mechanism, while the 【Hot Drinks】 are necessary to reduce the 【Cold Damage】 in the Snowy Field Dungeon. It looks like they wanted to make the exploration of both dungeons as easy as possible.

"I can prepare the 【Element Cream】, but I don't think I can make enough 【Hot Drinks】."

Because I just recently started cultivating the Hakuga material that's used to make the 【Hot Drink】 that grants cold resistance, I still don't have enough of it available. Rather, I intended to use that as a substitute for ginger, if anything.

"Can't you do something about it? Please?!"

"Like I said, there's no way I can prepare that many 【Hot Drinks】."

"Can't you do something, anything?!"

Even though I answered that it's physically impossible for me to do it, Mikadzuchi continued to lower her head.

Behind her, Taku seemed to have received a call from someone. He nodded a few times and then reported to Mikadzuchi.

"Snowy Field Dungeon was beaten just now."

"Missy, we're cancelling the order for 【Hot Drinks】."

"That's a real quick change of mind you did there. You've clearly lost your motivation, as well."

I stared at Mikadzuchi as she sighed deeply and started drinking alcohol

straight from a bottle.

Seeing her look somewhat irritated, I asked straightforwardly.

"Mikadzuchi, why are you so frantic?"

"Frantic? Of course I am. Sei will be gone soon!"

"What do you mean by “she'll be gone”?"

I tilted my head in wonder and stared at Sei-nee, who was standing beside Mikadzuchi with a wry smile. She supplemented Mikadzuchi's answer.

"Yun-chan, you know I'm coming home for Christmas, right? The number of days I can spend on the event will be reduced because of that."

"Oh, I guess so."

Sei-nee won't be able to log in for some time since she'll be coming back home for the New Year's holidays. Because of that, they wanted to beat at least one dungeon as soon as possible.

"So, who the hell was it that beat the Snowy Field Dungeon so fast?"

Sulky because her target had been stolen, Mikadzuchi asked Taku.

"It was a joint party made from several small guilds. Heck, one of the participants, 【OSO Fishermen Association】's guild master, boasted to me just now."

Taku said that dejectedly, but I realized that I had heard about something like that before.

Thinking about it, I recalled that Letia's 【Fresh Green Wind】 had been doing event quests jointly together with other small and medium guilds.

"The party members' breakdown was three people from 【OSO Fishermen Association】, one person from 【Fresh Green Wind】, one from 【Fluffy Tail Association】, and one guildless."

"Meaning, it was those guilds' hidden trump cards... hm? What is it, missy?"

Mikadzuchi noticed me look off into the distance as I heard familiar guild names.

"No, it's nothing."

Letia was probably the player from 【Fresh Green Wind】, while Ber was probably the one from 【Fluffy Tail Association】. In addition, the guildless player might have been Emily-san.

Well, if Letia and the others managed to have some success, then as their friend I could only be happy for them.

That day, we collected plenty of information about what's inside the dungeons, but there was no other report about any of them being cleared for the first time. Astounded by their high level of difficulty, players have focused on the yet-unfinished quests inside the town in order to raise the quest completion rate and decrease the difficulty of the 【Devil】 dungeons.

And after a few days have passed——

"Yun-san... we got completely beat up in the dungeon."

I've started growing the new 【Magi-Scream Grass】material on the fields outside 【Atelier】.

The 【Mystic Medicinal Grass】and 【Soul Grass】that I started cultivating earlier have finally stabilized, and when I was using the gathered materials to make Mega Potions and MP Pots, Lyna and Al entered the 【Atelier】 and called out to me.

"For now, we're going to do normal event quests until the death penalty is gone, so please give us some potions."

"Coming right up."

They've recently switched from ordinary Potions to High Potions, so I picked some of those up and passed them to the two as I had a light chat with them.

"We heard that Letia-san finished the Snowy Field Dungeon, so we thought that we could do it too!"

"No, where does that confidence of yours even come from? Also, so it really was Letia who cleared that dungeon, huh."

"It was. Letia-san, Ber-san and Emily-san cooperated with players from 【OSO Fishermen's Association】 and cleared it."

Since he heard about it from the people themselves, Al was quite knowledgeable about it.

They used Letia's tamed mobs and Emily-san's synthetic mobs to move at high speeds so they could minimize the damage caused by 【Cold Damage】, and they further decreased that damage by munching on Hakuga roots. Like that, they advanced straight to the boss.

【Hindering Devil】 was the boss mob's name and it seemed to focus on defense. However, the attacks of Ber and Emily-san's synthetic golem mobs were able to break through the boss' defenses, and 【OSO Fishermen Association】's top players, which included Shichifuku, dealt the damage to the boss himself.

In addition, not only did Letia use her tamed mobs, but she also used light magic and recovery magic to support the entire party.

"Looks like Letia and the others are also having some eventful time during the event."

"They sure are. Ah, it's about time for the death penalty to wear off, so we'll be going back to doing some normal leveling before we try to complete the dungeon again."

"Got it. ...Oh, speaking of which, how's it going with the newbie players from Ber's guild?"

"It's okay. They're good girls. Well, we'll come again."

Is what Lyna said as she tried to leave 【Atelier】 while waving her hand. However, the short spear she was carrying on her back got stuck in the doors and she ended up making a small fuss. Seeing this comedic scene, I ended up smiling wryly.

And after I saw Lyna and Al off, Myu passed by them and entered the store with force.

"Yun-oneechan! Let's go to a dungeon! Dungeon nau!"

"Myu, I told you not to call me "oneechan". Heck, what dungeon do you even intend to take me to?"

Her party is one that already has six members, constituting a full party, so there would be a penalty if I joined them. She should already know that.

Though, there was a certain dungeon that was an exception——

"Of course, the dungeon that Oneechan can challenge together with us—— the Road Dungeon!"

I did consider that possibility, but it was that after all, huh.

"We got beat on our first attempt last time, but this time we've gathered plenty of info and prepared countermeasures to take revenge! But for that to happen, we need you!"

"Need me, huh..."

There's no way I would be that useful in direct combat... is what I thought without much motivation, but unlike me, Myu was brimming with it.

"So, why invite me?"

"You see, it's because you have Ryui!"

"Ryui?"

Ryui, who was sleeping in his young beast form at his usual spot inside the store, stood up and came next to me.

"Yup. If someone falls off of the sled, then they'll have to retire immediately. However, we can still recover that person if you summon Ryui. On top of that, we can expect a lot from your Enchants." Is what she said as she stared at me.

It's hard to refuse when I'm being asked for support. My character has been designed to play that role since the beginning, after all.. Also, Ryui snorted loudly for some reason, clearly raring to go.

"Now that I think about it, Ryui has yet to perform in actual combat. Want to do it?"

Ryui nodded, and I decided as well.

"Fine. I'll try the Road Dungeon with yo——" "Thank you, Oneechan!" ——"

Before I could even finish talking, Myu held both of my hands and shook them. And then, as if she had recalled something, she squeezed Ryui who was

standing next to me.

"All right, let's go beat the dungeon right away then!"

"Wait a second! I don't have any info about that dungeon!"

"It's not like the game will always wait for its players! If you can't prepare beforehand, make do with what you have! This way it's more thrilling than preparing a sure-fire method!"

Oh, come on. What's so bad about gathering information?

What's so bad about preparing beforehand?

What's so bad about sure-fire methods that are safe? It's not like we need the thrill.

On top of that, it's not like the players or parties who clear these dungeons will get anything special. It doesn't matter who beats them. That's what I thought, but unlike me, Myu might be thinking that being the first ones to defeat the dungeon has some sort of meaning.

"In any case, wait a bit. I want to prepare as much as I can!"

"Okay, but make it fast. We want to go even if it's a second earlier!"

Good grief, I thought with a bitter smile as I started picking out necessary items from 【Atelier】 and stuffing them into my inventory. After that, I returned Ryui to his Summoning Stone before finally heading out to the Road Dungeon together with Myu.

Chapter 6 - Road Dungeon and Battle in the Rush

Dusk. Together with Myu, we have arrived in front of the Road Dungeon, one of the five dungeons created outside of the First Town's walls.

I took a few Mega Potions and MP Pots from 【Atelier】, but I'd like to avoid using them if possible.

We joined up with Lucato and the others in front of the dungeon.

"Sorry, it took time to persuade Yun-oneechan!"

"I don't remember being persuaded, really. Also, Myu, was there really any need to hurry so much?"

After coming here at an unusually high pace, I was a little out of breath. I took a deep breath several times to calm myself, and then asked this question——

"Nope! But let's say that there was!"

"Geez, you're absurd."

While I sighed in amazement, Lucato and the others all smiled bitterly as they stood behind Myu.

"Good evening, Yun-san. Thank you for coming with us today."

"Don't mind it, everyone. It's not like there's any risk, and I'm curious about the reward for having all five dungeons cleared."

I said, and then had a chat with Lucato and the others. Meanwhile, Myu had lined up among the players waiting to enter the dungeon, securing our place.

"Heey! Everyone, this waaay!"

"Ugh, I'm suddenly feeling nervous."

When Myu called for us and we all looked her way, I got nervous as I recalled that although I'm going in as a support, we're going to be entering battle right away.

"There's nothing to get nervous about, let's take it easy!"

We lined up where Myu had secured place for us. When I put a hand on my chest and took a deep breath to calm down, Myu lightly tapped my shoulder in order to relieve my tension.

It felt like it worked since I was able to relax a little.

And as the queue to enter the dungeon advanced, our turn came.

"Looks like it's our turn, shall we go in?"

"Yup. Yun-oneechan, after we enter, there will be a grace period before the fight starts, but don't let your guard down."

"G-got it."

I nodded in response to Myu's reminder and entered the dungeon together with the party members.

There was a white haze in the back of the gate that had opened, and I entered it as I made sure to keep from getting separated from Myu and others. Then, the ground beneath us suddenly disappeared, leaving us with a feeling of floating.

Along with the feeling of missing a step on the stairs, the clearing of my vision that was accompanied by a small impact made me realize that there was a snowy course in front of me.

"This place is..."

Slightly further ahead of me was Myu, Hino and Toutobi. Lucato, Kohaku and Rirei were behind me. All of them were on top of an one-person sled.

"Heey! Everyone all right?!"

"We're here, all okeey!"

There were empty sleds sliding downhill in our surroundings, players were appearing from nowhere and falling inside them one after another.

I checked below me again and saw that, just like the other players, I was on top of a fairly large sled that was rushing through the snow at a high speed.

"This sled looks quite sturdy. And... the view is pretty."

The snow powder that rose into the air due to the sleds rushing down the hill distracted me as it reflected the light, and the scenery stole my attention. Meanwhile I tried to maintain balance on top of the sled——

"——Wait, why am I acting all impressed! This thing is damn FAST!!"

I held the sled's reins and squatted down to lower my center of gravity, and then I simply endured.

Although the sled was spacious, it was still scary because of the high speed.

If I tilted my body to the right, the sled would move to the right, and the same thing happened if I tilted it to the left. Leaning forward caused me to accelerate, and I would decelerate if I leaned backwards. I was able to learn the basics by trying different postures, but I didn't have a complete grasp on the controls yet. I was only able to slightly move the sled in the direction I wanted.

On the other hand——

"Yahoooooo! TAKIN' THE LEAD!"

Myu opened her legs wide as if she was snowboarding and measured her sword's range as she swung it to the sides to balance herself. Moreover, she made a big jump by accelerating and pulling the front of the sled... heck, she's never gone snowboarding in real, yet she's going berserk in here!

"Myu-san! The battle hasn't started yet! Don't do anything dangerous!"

"It's still just the second time, but my Sense's support is amazing! When I got used to it, I became able to move thanks to 【Action Restriction Release】!"

She showed off some jumps where she rotated in mid-air, but I was really anxious that she might fail.

Since it was their second time as well, the party members other than Myu had also become used to handling the sleds, and their driving was stable.

The sight of Lucato using one hand to swing her bastard sword while on top of a sled was impactful.

Hino had her long spear resting on her shoulder as she slid her hand over it to adjust her reach.

The rearguard Kohaku and Rirei were also holding their fan and staff as they followed behind the rest of the party.

In the meantime, nearly all the sleds were filled with players, and the boss fight was about to begin.

"Luka-chan, Yun-oneechan, how are you doing?"

"No problems here, Myu-san."

"I still haven't gotten used to it..."

Aiming with a bow while on top of this unstable sled wasn't something I could do right away.

Meanwhile, Myu, who was rushing right to the front, stabbed her sword into the snowy road and used it as a brake to decelerate so that she could match Toutobi and Hino's speed.

"Don't force yourself too much, Yun-oneechan!"

You're the one who brought me here, I thought as I took a look around and saw one player's sled slide unstably.

And the next moment——

"Lucato, watch out!"

A player that was sliding in front of Lucato was thrown out because of his driving mistake, and the sled without a rider flew straight for Lucato and others.

"Kohaku and Rirei, stay behind me! HAA——《Shock Impact》!"

With Lucato as the lead, Kohaku and Rirei lined up behind her one after another, and then Lucato used an Art towards the sled that was closing in on

them.

She swung her bastard sword that was emitting yellow light at the sled diagonally from below, and after clashing for an instant, the sled bounced up.

From there, it flew far above me before falling further behind us, where it was then left in the back as it pierced into the snowy road.

When I looked away from the pierced-in-sled towards Lucato with a dumbfounded expression on my face and my mouth wide open, she made an embarrassed expression and smiled amiably.

"Nice thinking there, Luka-chan! GOOD JOB!"

Myu showered Lucato with praise for her calm response.

Though, on the other hand, the snow that was thrown into the air had flowed towards Hino and she plunged right into the cloud of it.

"Kyaahh?! Oh, come on!"

Hino passed through the snow and had her posture broken because of the surprise attack. She had snow covering her nose as she pursed her lips with a displeased expression on her face.

"H-Hino-chan, are you okay?"

"Um... I'm sorry, Hino-san."



Seeing the state Hino was in, Myu's and Lucato's expressions cramped up.

"Nhn... that opened holes in my winter clothes' tights! Damn you, dungeon boss! I won't let you off for this!"

Other than that happening, there were several players who, despite not being used to controlling the sleds, made some unreasonable movements and ended up dropping out before the battle even began. Meanwhile, a red-nosed eight-legged Devil Reindeer with thick and flat horns appeared, pulling a sleigh behind it that was carrying a devil that looked like a young boy. There were also other eight-legged Devil Reindeer who looked like the boss' underlings, each with a different colored nose.

It was the boss who stole the sleigh from Santa Claus——the 【Devil Brat】.

『"What's up? You came to take back the Saint's treasure? I don't mind! However——you need to beat me in this place first!"』

He spoke in a childish and innocent voice, but there was also roar coming from behind us... Wait! BEHIND us?!

『"Go now, my Devil Reindeers!"』

Myu and Lucato who were nearby, called out to me.

"Yun-oneechan, please cast enchants and support us as necessary! C'mon, Tobi-chan, Hino-chan. Let's go!"

"Well then, we're off! Don't force yourself, Yun-san!"

I nodded towards the two and followed everyone while concentrating on controlling the sled in the back behind them.

"《Enchant》——Attack, Defence... WOOAH?!"

When I cast a physical attack enchant and was about to add a physical defence one on top of it, something flew at me from ahead, so I avoided it in a hurry.

It was a chunk of snow.

And looking closely at the snowy road, I saw that there were holes in some places which could make the sled lose balance if we rode over them.

Moreover, those holes were made by the Devil Reindeers.

"Now that I look again, they sure have a horrible design."

The Devil Reindeer ran on eight legs with an evil look in their eyes. They also attacked with low level elemental magic that matched the color of their nose. As for their eight legs, four of them were used to maintain their high speed, while the remaining four were used to kick snow backwards at us.

They also used their flat horns like a scoop to powerfully scoop up the snow and throw it backwards in a parabolic trajectory.

Other than that, the Devil Reindeer would sometimes physically attack the players by tackling them, so their attacks were really diverse.

Although I wasn't being targeted by the enemy since I was in the last sled, even one randomly-dropped lump of snow could be the death of me.

"What's with this barrage of snow..."

"Yun-oneechan, do your best, but don't overdo it! Whoops, that was a close one."

"Same to you! I'm all right!"

I said that and made Myu focus on combat, but I didn't have the leisure to cast any enchants, and the sled was too unstable for me to participate in the battle with my bow.

In the meantime, Myu and the others, who had started to get into their combat pace, were skillfully manipulating their sleds as they fought back against the Devil Reindeers.

"Well then, here I go! ——《Delta Slash》!"

With Myu's attack as the opener, Toutobi and Hino followed her into combat.

They dispersed to avoid charging Devil Reindeers' attacks, and then immediately counterattacked.

Myu released a fast triple-slash Art, which was then followed by Toutobi dulling the enemy's movements by slashing them with a dagger Art that causes paralysis.

Lastly, Hino sped up her sled to approach the enemy from behind, before breaking the reindeer's balance by using her long spear to attack his legs.

The Devil Reindeer, which was running at high speed, lost his balance, rolled, and then bounced on the ground, before eventually being left behind by the players who were moving on their sleds.

『"GUOOooo——"』

Finally, the Reindeer was caught up in the collapse of the snowy road behind us and disappeared along with a growl.

Amen. I secretly thought as I saw that scene.

That was seriously no joke...

"Isn't this enough already? It's not just the snow attacks that are coming from the front, but there's also the snowy road's collapse that's chasing us from behind. On top of all that, there's also the Devil Reindeers themselves."

The Devil Reindeer that had disappeared in the collapse reappeared once more as it ran down from the sky just like when it had first appeared, before returning to the snowy road. It was the cyan-nosed Devil Reindeer.

However, the snowy road's collapse and the combined attacks of Myu and the others reduced his HP to 60%.

Then, the Devil Reindeer's nose suddenly started shining——

"WooAAH, no waaay!"

Riding on top of the unfamiliar sled, I tilted myself to the right in order to avoid the ice magic bullet.

Immediately after that, the ice bullet landed beside my sled, raising a cloud of snow.

Following that, the next two ice bullets flew over my head and hit the ground. I moved the sled further in order to avoid the snow cloud in my way.

What do I do, try attacking with the bow? Or maybe do a reckless attack with a knife...?

Apparently, in the 【Devil Brat】's dungeon, one of the methods to come back

into the game after losing a sled was to use a tamed mob like Ryui. However, I can't rely on him this early.

"...I've got no choice here. Let's force my way with consumables!"

I resolved myself and took out some Magic Gems from my inventory.

Then, while taking the gems' activation time into consideration, I measured the distance between me and the Devil Reindeer, chanted the keywords, and threw the gems behind me.

"——【Bomb】【Clay Shield】!"

The two types of magic that the gems carried were activated with the gems themselves as the starting point.

As a result, an earthen wall appeared in front of the Devil Reindeer and multiple explosions occurred.

However, the rushing reindeer broke through the wall, charged through the snow that rose into the air due to the explosions, and reappeared once again. Still, he didn't get through that unscathed, and had less than 50% of his HP remaining.

The damage I dealt was small when compared to the coordinated attack of Myu and the others, but still, seeing that I actually dealt substantial damage to it, I made a guts pose.

"All right! I can do this... wait, ehhhh?!"

I saw two Devil Reindeers that had been attacked by the frontline players and were now bouncing on the snowy road towards the rear.

I had a bad feeling about this, so I took a look backwards and...

"I KNEW ITTTTT!!!"

In addition to the first reindeer, there were now three of them chasing me, the furthest one in the back.

"Stay awaaaaaay!! ——【Bomb】!"

This time, I scattered three times as many Magic Gems from my sled.

The Devil Reindeers were assaulted by even more explosions than before.

Out of the three, two of them were blown away towards the collapsing snowy road, while the third one received a large amount of damage on the spot.

"Ohh! Yun-san's havin' fun, eh."

"Kohaku! This isn't fun at all!"

"Fufufu, then how about we steal the best part."

Kohaku and Rirei, who were being protected from the front by Lucato, had turned their attention towards the rear.

The reindeer that had been blown away reappeared by running down from the sky. Kohaku and Rirei released their magic at them.

The two's magic passed over my head and took down the reindeer's remaining HP, turning them into particles of light.

"Ooooh! Yun-oneechan's having fun!"

Just what part of my panicking looks like I'm having fun, is what I wanted to ask Myu, but before that I decided to confirm the situation we were in.

The Devil Reindeers were being eliminated one by one by the other players.

In addition, the most eerie thing about it was that the 【Devil Brat】 left all of the fighting to his subordinate Devil Reindeers as he single-mindedly drove the sleigh. The 【Road Dungeon】's boss battle was slowly heading for the middle stage.



The number of Demon Reindeers gradually decreased, and the number of attacks that roughened the snowy road decreased along with them.

At this rate, the players will be able to focus on the boss once all eight reindeer have been defeated.

While I was thinking such an optimistic thing, a group of players that appeared to be part of the same party approached the 【Devil Brat】 and attacked him.

While making sure not to clash with one another, Myu and the other players

exchanged places as they attacked the 【Devil Brat】 on top of the sleigh that's being pulled by the red-nosed Devil Reindeer.

"Looks like the front is quite safe. I should make sure I won't get assaulted from behind."

Every Devil Reindeers that has collapsed after receiving attacks from the players has rolled back into the snowy road's collapse and then reappeared to attack the players again.

Many players have already retired because they were attacked from behind, so we couldn't afford to leave those reindeer alone.

Remaining in the very back, I started to get used to controlling the sled and manipulated the reins with one hand while holding a bottle containing a bad status drug in the other.

While controlling the sled so that I could avoid the Devil Reindeer that was heading straight for me, I threw the potion towards the location I was just at a moment earlier.

The potion rotated in the air and was shattered by the rushing reindeer's horns, spilling the liquid that was inside.

As a result, the Devil Reindeer was covered in the potion's contents, and having lost strength in his legs, it smashed its head into the snow road. Unable to move, it was swallowed by the collapsing snowy road soon after that.

"Great, bad statuses work on them."

The Devil Reindeers in the back were charging forward in an attempt to reunite with their comrades in the front, and while the 【Paralysis】, 【Sleep】 and 【Stun】 bad statuses were effective, they didn't deal any damage. However, because the enemy would become unable to move due to these effects, it could be expected that they would receive damage when they got caught up in the snowy road's collapse.

"Yun-san, you sure are usin' some nasty attacks there."

"Fufufu, you were letting out such cute screams just a moment ago, but

you've already gotten used to it. And here I wanted to hear some more of them."

Kohaku and Rirei, who were close by, threw such words my way from a little in front of me.

Meanwhile, they continued to cast spells without end over the players' heads.

In addition to that, Lucato protected the two from all of the attacks coming from the front.

With all that going on, I continued to use Magic Gems and bad status potions to prevent the attacks coming from the Devil Reindeers behind us.

The four of us made a diamond formation, with Lucato in front, Kohaku and Rirei in middle to the left and right, and me in the back. Each of us protected the others from the attacking Devil Reindeers on our respective sides.

Then, one of the reindeer was paralysed by a bad status drug once again, and after being caught up in the road's collapse, turned into particles of light and disappeared.

As the number of Devil Reindeers decreased to three, the 【Devil Brat】 finally showed a new reaction.

『"——You damn lowly humans!! Fine, I'll use the power I stole from the Saint to get rid of you all!"』

Making a complete change from his child-like appearance and way of speaking, the 【Devil Brat】's face distorted in an ugly manner and shockwaves started emanating from his body.

Players who were trying to deliver attacks at that moment were pushed back by the shockwaves. Seeing them somehow manage to maintain their balance on top of their sleds and avoid falling off, I sighed with relief.

"If he had that kind of ability, why didn't he just throw the players off right from the start?"

"Yun-san, what horrendous things yer' sayin'."

"Yun-san, that would be nonsensical."

Kohaku and Lucato retorted after apparently hearing what I muttered.

Meanwhile, Myu used a converged light beam in an attempt to attack the 【Devil Brat】 while he was protected by the shockwaves, but even that simply bent away from the boss.

The 【Devil Brat】 raised his right hand and started reciting a chant that resonated within the space, while at the same time continuing to emanate shockwaves.

『"——Twist, twist, pierce, break. None of you shall walk in my space. I order you in my evil's name!"』

In response to these words, a change occurred to the straight snowy road.

"Hahaha, and here I had started getting used to controlling this sled..."

Seeing the scenery change, I squeezed out a trembling voice.

The snowy road that led into the distance started to undulate ahead of us and turn into a course with many turns.

How do we even catch up to the enemy on a curvy race course like this? Moreover, the snowy road's collapse behind us has increased in speed and is approaching us along with a loud roar.

I bent slightly forward to increase my speed and maintain a fixed distance from the chasing collapse, but there were many among the players who were participating in the battle from the rear position like me that were unable to cope with the collapse's increased speed, and while they weren't immediately caught in it, they eventually lost control of their sleds and ended up crashing somewhere. There were also some players who were simply caught up in the collapse, and their screams remained in my ears for a while.

However, along with the course's change, the 【Devil Brat】's shockwaves disappeared. Noticing that before anyone else, Myu raised her voice.

"It's a chance! Oneechan! Speed buff and fire element!"

"Huhh?!"

"Hurry!"

“Oh c’mon! 《Enchant》——Speed! 《Element Enchant》——Weapon!”

Responding to Myu’s request, I cast a speed enchant on her, and then crushed a fire element stone and cast fire element enchant on her sword.

Then——

“Making a curvy road won’t let you run away from me! ——《Nine Sword Slash》!”

“Woaah?! S-she flew?!”

Here I thought she would ride on the side of the tunnel to approach the 【Devil Brat】 as soon as possible, but she simply jumped out of the course.

She had the sled bounce right before falling out of the course, and then glided using the momentum before landing after the bulge of the curve, allowing her to take a bold shortcut.

Along with the momentum of her jump, she approached the 【Devil Brat】 and attacked his back with an 【Art】’s chain attack that had been imbued with a fire enchant.

However, not only had her control of the sled become weak because of the big jump and landing she performed, but she had also become unable to act because of the large attack she had unleashed on the 【Devil Brat】. As a result, she ended up sliding sideways out of the course.

At that moment, the 【Devil Brat】 turned towards Myu and cast an ice spear at her, but luckily she was able to avoid it by piercing her sword into the road with one hand and using it to decelerate.

Seeing her like that caused me powerfully grip the sled’s reins as I completely froze up inside from anxiety.

Just a small mistake and she would have ended up heading straight off the course and been forced to retire, yet she still went and did something that reckless.

“Wooah... that was close.”

“Myu-san! Stop acting reckless!”

Lucato raised her voice as she spoke to Myu from far away. In response to it, Myu raised her hand and waved at her, causing me to let out an appalled sigh.

"Fufufu, we should try as well——《Lava Cannon》!"

"We should do our share of work so that Myu doesn't have ta' overdo it! 《Aero Cannon》!"

A bullet of burning lava created by Rirei flew along the snowy road towards the devil.

If the lava bullet flew as it normally would, the 【Devil Brat】 would have avoided it. However, Kohaku's Aero Cannon gave the lava bullet a burst of acceleration while it was in mid-air.

The accelerated lava bullet entered the straight course towards the boss, but since the Devil Reindeer attempted to avoid it, the lava bullet exploded in mid-air and bathed the 【Devil Brat】 and the reindeer in flames like an incendiary bomb.

"Great! The big attack succeeded!"

"Everything's going well. We might have overdone it a little, though."

The boss, who appeared from a cloud of snow that rose due to Kohaku and Rirei's combo attack, had received the biggest damage so far.

Seeing that, they drove next to one another and gave each other a high five.

Not wanting to lose, the other players took sharp turns and rode on the inner side of each curve in order to chase after the 【Devil Brat】 and assault him.

Receiving these charging attacks from several players, the boss' HP was gradually reduced.

And then, just like when the snowy road became curved, the 【Devil Brat】 started releasing shockwaves and players became unable to approach him.

『"You damn inferior species!! Here I am, going out of my way to play with you, and you get all conceited! You've made me get serious!"』

The shockwaves that were being released by the boss stopped after the curvy course had disappeared and the straight snowy road returned.

And at the same time, the speed of the snowy road's collapse became even faster. The approaching roar created a sense of tension among the players.

Other than the red-nosed one that was pulling the 【Devil Brat】's sleigh, the other Devil Reindeer were unable to overcome the collapse's speed, and together with a low reverberating growl, were caught up in it one after the other. After that, hundreds of ice spears appeared one after another above the red-nosed reindeer that was pulling the boss' sleigh.

"Hey hey, I can't keep up with this."

『"——Pierce in from the sky, Icicle Cage!"』

Driving the sled in the very back, I watched the trajectory of the ice spears from a distance. It didn't look like they were aimed at the players, but were shot at the snowy road in front of us instead.

They ended up randomly piercing the road, forming ice pillar-like obstacles.

Myu and Hino rushed past the ice pillars that they approached by using their weapons to break them. However, as the pillars shattered, they ended up dealing damage to the players that attacked them.

Toutobi chose to avoid the obstacles instead, so she didn't receive any damage. However, as a result, she was unable to travel fast enough to catch up to the 【Devil Brat】.

Speaking of those of us in the back, it's not like we were safe either.

The ice spears regularly thrown by the boss continued to create obstacles, and there were players who bumped into the icicles and fell out of their sleds, or had them turn over. As they rolled on the ground, they ended up attacking us in the rear.

"——They're coming our way!"

One of the sleds that lost control after failing to avoid the icy obstacles was rotating at high speed as it approached us.

Lucato swung her bastard sword and repelled the sled, but at the same time that was happening, an icy spear pierced into the snowy road in front of Kohaku.

As a result, Kohaku was thrown out of her sled and sent flying through the air.

“——Kohaku!”

They had to use their sword and magic to intercept the incoming ice spears, so neither Lucato nor Rirei were able to react to the instantaneous event and recover Kohaku.

At this rate, Kohaku would fall into the snowy road and it would become difficult to help her. In addition, I was the only one in the back who was able to catch her.

However, if I changed course to do so, I would hit an obstacle.

If I avoided to the left, I could safely dodge it——

“Kohaku! Oneechan!”

“?!! Oh, damn it! Gotta show a man’s guts!”

I tilted my body to the right and charged right into an ice pillar. If I can’t escape to safety, then I might as well resolve myself to plunge into danger.

“——《Clay Shield》! Kohaku, hold on!”

I created a diagonal wall of earth and sped up as I rushed up the self-made jumping platform.

And then, after using it to launch myself high into the air, I flew over the ice pillar and caught Kohaku in mid-air.

“Yun-san?! Why?!”

Although the jumping platform’s angle wasn’t that high, we maintained the momentum that I jumped with as we hit the ground and charged straight into an ice pillar. Pierced by the shattered fragments, Kohaku and I received damage.

I managed to catch Kohaku in the air, but this resulted in me becoming unable to control the accelerated sled.

“Yun-san, I’m grateful fer help, but... at this rate we’re out!”

“I know! But don’t expect me to have good enough reflexes to freely control the sled!”

"Why the confident response?!"

The sled continued to move at a speed that I couldn't control. At this rate, we would end up outside of the snowy road's course.

I felt a little guilty after imagining what would happen afterwards, but there was nothing I wouldn't do so that the two of us would survive.

"Well then, let's fly!"

"Heeh? Fly... wakyaa?!!"

While holding Kohaku in my arms, I jumped off the sled that continued to accelerate and leave the course.

From there, I immediately summoned Ryui, who I had left in reserve until now.

"Come, Ryui! ——《Summon》!"

The moment I jumped off the sled, adult Ryui appeared below me and started running with us on his back.

Meanwhile, the sled we were riding on left the course and disappeared into empty space.

"Woah!! So fast! So high, Yun-san!"

"Kohaku, don't talk. You'll bite your tongue."

Held in my arms from behind and riding together with me, Kohaku appeared really moved she could ride Ryui and was in really high spirits.

On the other hand I held Ryui's reins in my left hand and skillfully... well, I didn't control Ryui, and just left everything to him as he ran down the snowy road.

Weaving his way in the gaps between the icicle obstacles, Ryui was able to soon rejoin Myu and others. His abilities really were far beyond what I deserved.

"Nice assist there, Oneechan!"

"...I can't save anyone again now."

And don't call me "oneechan", are the words I swallowed, leaving it a short answer.

I took a look around and other than Myu's party members, I saw quite fewer players, but the 【Devil Brat】 boss had lost quite a lot of HP and appeared driven into a corner.

However, because of attacks from ice spears and ice pillar obstacles, we were somewhat unable to deliver a decisive attack towards the boss.

The obstacles that broke but delivered damage to the one who broke them, were quite plain but atrocious.

I felt the damage received from one by myself when I earlier charged into one when saving Kohaku, hitting an ice pillar once was all right, but if it repeated the amount of damage would accumulate quickly and it would take large amount of HP, plus it affected the sled's control.

"You received quite some damage, Oneechan, Kohaku."

"Yeah. And I used some magic so my MP decreased, guess I should use a potion."

I used one of the few Mega Potions and MP Pots I had on Kohaku and myself, rapidly recovering us. Kohaku made a surprised expression at the amount of HP/MP recovered, but let's not touch on the subject for now.

Well, what do we do next? I wondered as I rode Ryui. Beside me Myu rode on her sled.

Now that all of Myu's party have come together again, we moved while having Lucato and Hino eliminate all the ice pillars in the way to ensure ourselves safety.

Behind them were me, Kohaku and Myu, and following behind us were Toutobi and Rirei.

"Since there are obstacles in the way, Hino-san and I will secure the route. Myu and Toutobi-san will slash at the boss, Rirei, Kohaku and Yun-san provide support from the back. Agreed?"

"No objections! How's everyone?"

Myu energetically agreed with Lucato's proposal and as I took a look around, everyone nodded, so I also consented to the plan.

Lucato and Hino immediately accelerated their sleds and started destroying obstacles one after another with their Arts.

"HAa——《Shock Impact》!"

"Outta way! ——《Large Swing》!"

Lucato swung her bastard sword, Hino swung around her long spear and the two crushed icicles one after another, leaving behind a sparkly diamond dust on the snowy road.

However, at the same time the two also received damage.

"I'll smash a powerful bullet there——《Lava Cannon》!"

"And I'll deliver't wit' my wind! ——《Aero Cannon》!"

Kohaku whom I was holding while riding Ryui, jumped down onto Rirei's sled and the two cast magic.

The two magics' power was raised by the synergistic effect and destroyed the spears of ice flying in the air, cancelling each other out.

"Go on! 《Enchant》——Attack, speed!"

I cast enchants on Myu and Toutobi who accelerated and headed for the 【Devil Brat】, raising their stats.

At the same time the enchants activated, the two approached the boss with a strong momentum.

Other than that, using the opportunity made by Lucato and Hino, other players who have survived started showering the 【Devil Brat】 with attacks.

"——GOOOOOooo!!!"

『"This is why humans are annoying!"』

The 【Devil Brat】 didn't stay idle as this happened. He whipped the red-nosed Devil Reindeer who was pulling the sled to speed up, and matching the timing of the attacking players he opened the distance with them.

And he counterattacked.

"We might be in a pinch."

"...Myu-san, let's escape!"

Because of the boss' speed up, there was space opened between him and Myu and Toutobi, the amount of ice spears coming down also increased to an extent where Kohaku and Rirei were unable to destroy them all.

Those attacks were on direct course towards Myu and others, and were launched during the opening made after they attacked, so they couldn't avoid.

"—《Magic Bow Skill – Phantom Arrow》!"

In order to fill that gap I shot a magical arrow from the back, intercepting the ice spears in mid-air.

In the back, I buffed myself with enchants, crushed a wind element stone to cast a wind enchant on my weapon and also used an arrow with 【Echo Liquid】 dripped on it, like that I could release the fastest attack possible.

Preparations and basic support aside, following up on comrades' mistakes were also part of support's job. Although I was unable to use it on an unstable sled, I had no problems using the bow from Ryui's back.

Myu and Toutobi slowed down the moment I destroyed the ice spears and joined us in the back.

"One more charge! Let's attack again!"

"Just earlier the boss ran away right before we could attack him. We aren't fast enough."

"Above all, we couldn't destroy all the spears with our attacks. We can't guarantee your safety next time you go in."

Toutobi calmly shared her opinion, then next Kohaku had peeked out from behind Rirei's back on the same sled and added, making Myu groan.

"Hmm, what do we do then?"

"Just one more attempt. If we don't finish it this time, the number of players

capable of attacking will decrease and we'll be checkmated."

"Then how about we challenge the boss for as much as possible and use the information on next try?"

Lucato and Hino proposed, but Myu protested loudly.

"I won't give up! Maybe next time we'll get a lucky hit, we still haven't used all the options we have. That's why I'm going to continue challenging him here!"

Here we thought we've driven the boss into the corner, but ended up just the opposite, and yet Myu still enjoyed the game.

Her feelings have been conveyed to everyone in the party.

And I thought that I'd like them to win.

However, catching up to the 【Devil Brat】's would be difficult.

Although I could destroy the large number of ice spears that are created by using my bow, but I probably couldn't reach the boss.

It was possible for me to use 【Zone Bomb】 attack method to cause multiple explosions within the range of my vision, but while I could use it to destroy the ice spears, it didn't have enough power to stop the 【Devil Brat】's high speed rush.

Isn't there a method allowing us to safely move near the boss and stop him from moving, even for a moment—I wondered as I looked through the item menu's column, searching for something that can be used.

And I found the most suitable item for this situation.

"I have two ideas. However, after we do this I won't be able to fight afterwards. So you're warned."

"It can't be, a method where Yun-oneechan sacrifices herself?! I won't acknowledge a plan like that!"

"That's not it, don't worry. Also, it's not worth calling that a plan. We'll have Myu get on Ryui's who's fast and then I'll just use an item that comes with quite the backlash."

Hearing that, Myu immediately jumped on Ryui and sat behind me.

Meanwhile, Hino used her long spear to skillfully manipulate Myu's empty sled, guiding it to a place where it'd be easy for me to get on it.

I fearfully jumped onto the sled, then operated it's reins while wondering how can everyone else handle these sleds without any hesitation.

"I'll leave the timing for charging to Myu. Matching that, I'll use the item, once that happens everyone rush in. Ryui, protect Myu."

I extended my hand from the sled to Ryui who was next to me, and after patting his torso I moved away.

Although I let Myu on top of him without telling him anything beforehand, Ryui obediently followed my orders which I really appreciated.

On the other hand, Myu trembled from excitement caused by the fact she got to ride Ryui, but then immediately braced herself.

I took out the 【Echo Liquid】 magic potion that I made at Pharmacist Obaba's place.

Although it was a potion used on a weapon like I did earlier, to add an elemental attack to it, I was about to use it in a different way though.

"Oneechan, so that's what you're using! Well, let's go everyone!"

Matching Myu's charge, I cast a speed enchant on Ryui.

Just like before, Lucato and Hino plus Toutobi have started cutting the route open, Kohaku and Rirei cast spells to destroy the ice spears created by the 【Devil Brat】.

Other surviving players too, have matched our attack and attacked with both magic and normal attacks, making the 【Devil Brat】 scream in annoyance.

『"You will not catch up to my speed, no matter what you do! Your struggle is in vain, hurry up and fall out!"』

"As if we'd give up. We're—"

I took a deep breath, opened the lid of 【Echo Liquid】 potion, and drank it all.

As my throat burned from the heat, I squeezed out the air I had in my lungs to

make my voice as loud as possible.



“—『"UNEXPECTEDLY TENACIOUS!!"』—

My voice got amplified and echoed within this space, attacking the enemy. With just that, all enemy mobs received wind elemental damage and further caused an additional 【Paralysis】 effect.

“Myu-san, now!”

Before Lucato even called, Ryui rushed through the snow as fast as possible.

The additional effect of 【Echo Liquid】 had caused the 【Devil Brat】’s body to stiffen for a moment and make him unable to counterattack with ice spears, the movement of the red-nosed Devil Reindeer also grew dull.

『"...You...lowly...humaaaanssss!!!"』

However, though rotten, he’s still a boss. He must have had high bad status resistance as he immediately recovered from paralysis and started launching ice spears at the approaching players.

On the other hand, Ryui with Myu on his back took the shortest course and thrust into the spears.

Then, Ryui along with Myu who was riding him, had started to become hazy and turned translucent, like that they passed between the ice spears.

The perfect evasion which used Ryui’s transparency. It’s thanks to this ability that he could run to the enemy using the shortest route.

When the 【Devil Brat】 noticed the two’s existence, they were already near him. The boss managed to recover from 【Paralysis】, but the Devil Reindeer’s movement pulling the sleigh were still slow and they couldn’t escape.

Myu entered the attacking motion forcibly cancelling Ryui’s invisibility, but it was too late for the 【Devil Brat】 to escape.

And Myu’s weapon flashed.

『"...It can’t...be..."』

The boss’ body collapsed from the sleigh, received attacks from the players who caught up one after another, and rolled on top of the snowy road.

We avoided his body and moved ahead, meanwhile the 【Devil Brat】 rolled

further backwards before getting caught up in the snowy road's collapse and disappeared.



"Yess! We finally beat him!"

Great, we beat him.

Myu expressed her joy with her entire body, Ryui who allowed her to ride him found that annoying so he slowed down, looking irritated.

"Oneechan, we did it! We won!"

I told you to call me "onii-chan", geez...

When using the 【Echo Liquid】 magic potion in a wrong way, the player who used it can't say anything for a while after, thus cannot use any magic or Arts. I knew this much beforehand, though.

Because of that I kept quiet and only listened to Myu as she one-sidedly continued to talk.

Before long, the obstacles on the snowy field disappeared and we saw the end of the seemingly-endless snowy course, and the surviving players have jumped into the gate of light one after another.

We followed them, diving into the gate—

—Congratulations. With the boss mob defeated, the Road Dungeon has been cleared. Once the two remaining dungeons, the 【Hearth】 and 【Graveyard】 dungeons are cleared, the special special events' tasks will be complete.

Listening to the announcement while in the light, we experienced the floating feeling just like when we entered the dungeon.

Eventually, the sled beneath our feet had turned into light particles and disappeared and players were dropped outside the dungeon one after another.

Among them, Myu riding on top of Ryui stood out most of all and combined

with the fact the dungeon was just cleared, she has caught attention of many players.

It looked like a new page had been added to my little sister's legend, I thought and smiled bitterly.

And thus, Myu's party has been surrounded by many players who came out of the dungeon.

Ryui who had Myu on his back had put her down on the ground, turned invisible, passed through the crowd and returned back to me.

Other players thought that Ryui was 《Dismissed》 and checked their surroundings for him, but he was just hiding himself next to me.

It seemed like it would take some more time for Myu and others to exchange appreciations and the 【Echo Liquid】's effect still continued so I quietly left the place together with Ryui.

I guess they'll get angry at me for going off by myself, huh, I thought as I returned to 【Atelier】, after which I quickly logged out.

In the end, as for the Christmas dungeon results, the 【Snowy Field Dungeon】 was cleared by Letia her party and while we were clearing the Road Dungeon, some other party had cleared the 【Giant Tree Dungeon】.

The remaining ones were the 【Hearth】 and 【Graveyard】 dungeons, they were quickly cleared by someone two days later when the quest event's completion rate increased and the dungeon difficulty decreased.

When all the dungeons were cleared, the tools stolen from Santa Claus NPC have been returned. The Santa Claus returned to the sky once again, we happened to see him leaving towards somewhere while laughing merrily.

Then, an announcement flowed to all players saying that Santa Claus has been saved.

—Congratulations. Santa Claus' tools have been safely retrieved from the hands of the Devils, as proof of thanks Santa Claus shall deliver everyone a 【Present Box】 on 23rd of December after the event ends.

The special reward 【Present Box】 was an item that could be acquired for 50 Quest Chips, so it was pretty much the same as if every player was given 50 Quest Chips.

Well, some players still said that it would be better to receive 50 Quest Chips rather than an item.

After that announcement was made, I was spending my time in leisure alone inside 【Atelier】.

Taking my time, waiting...

"Yo, I came to play."

"Sorry to intrude there, Missy."

"...Why are you two here, Taku, Mikadzuchi?"

While I resting myself in 【Atelier】, Taku and Mikadzuchi (in a slightly bad mood) came over.

"Hey, listen to this Missy! Sei's completely heartless!! We finally managed to complete the 【Graveyard】 dungeon with our 【Eight Million Gods】 elite members, but she immediately logged out saying she has no time!"

"Well, there're preparations for homecoming and it takes time to travel. Myu and I look forward to her coming, too. If she was late because of you..."

Although I didn't finish the sentence, but what I said appeared threatening enough as Mikadzuchi obediently nodded.

"Got it, I don't want to make enemies out of you two."

"It's tomorrow that Sei-san's coming back, right. Yun, can I come over to meet her too? I'll buy some juice and sweets before coming."

"I prepared appetizers and cake for Christmas so come to eat some. The more people join the party the more fun, it will end up a game tournament anyway. At least four are needed for stuff to get lively."

When we're playing party games for four people it's always more fun to fight with the usual four of us. Well, it's almost certain that I'll be at the bottom of

the ranking, though.

The, while I chatted with Taku and Mikadzuchi, the time finally came.

—Commencing score calculation. None of the actions will be counted into the score from now on. The results shall be announced once calculations are complete. Repeating.

It finally began, the event's results announcement.

After a while, a menu was displayed in front of me.

—Quest completion rate: 86%. Christmas dungeons: cleared. Possessed number of Quest Chips: 79.

When I completed all magic potion delivery quests at Obaba's pharmacy I had 76 Quest Chips, then after clearing the 【Road Dungeon】 I did three more errand type quests for 1 Quest Chip each, amounting to total of 79 Quest Chips.

Also, other than the Quest Chips there was the 【Present Box】 reward for clearing the 【Christmas Dungeons】 and a reward for 【Quest Completion Rate】.

"What's this...? 【As a reward for completing between 80-90% of quests, 7SP will be granted to all the players】 it says."

"7 SP huh, as long as you pick up Senses at normal pace, it's an amount of extra SP you'll easily gather."

Mikadzuchi answered Taku while scratching the back of his head, but I had a different opinion.

"Isn't their goal to give more spare SP to players so that they pick up more, different Senses?"

Hearing my words Mikadzuchi answered "you could also think that way", but then Taku pointed out a different kind of problem.

"But y'know, this means the total amount of SP acquired increased and there will be players who get caught in current potions' recovery limit, right?"

"" ""

What he said was reasonable. If SP acquired passes a certain amount, the recovery amount of certain potions decreases. There are certain potions such as Blue Potions and Yellow Potions that avoid it, but the recipes for them are quite troublesome.

In which case, anticipating the trouble it's better to act beforehand. Thinking so I immediately instructed Kyouko the NPC who was in the store, to purchase the materials for those potions before the price increased.

"Well, leaving that aside. Personally I feel slightly bitter, y'know. If every player received 7 SP for 80-90% quest completion rate, what do you think we would get for over 91% completion rate?"

"True, I'm also curious about what was the top reward."

And then, the two changed the topic towards the 【Present Box】's exchange item.

"What about you, Yun? Aren't you going to open your 【Present Box】?"

The 【Present Box】 was an item that gave the player an item the player wanted at the moment.

However, it didn't gift player high-performance items that would break the game's balance, and only included joke-like items with average performance.

"Hmm, what should I do..."

"In your case it'd be something like infinite arrows, or plant seeds, or maybe new potion recipe, something like that?"

Mikadzuchi who quickly opened his own item box, had received a small distiller, and asked while looking my way.

And Taku too, had exchanged his Quest Chips and opened his 【Present Box】, then lined up items that he received.

He exchanged 100 Quest Chips for weapon made with magic-remodelled materials, and from the 【Present Box】 he received sheath matching it.

Taku usually used twin long swords, but the weapon from magic-remodelled

materials was a single-edged and slightly curved sword—a weapon normally called katana.

The blade's length wasn't much different from the swords Taku usually used, but the slashing method was different between a sword and a katana.

And the sheath matching the sword, also seemed to have some feature.

"Taku, and that sheath?"

"It doesn't feel right to just carry katana around bare. I ordered a sheath without durability setting, like this I can use the katana and the sheath as twin swords, right?"

What are you, a master fencer? I retorted in my mind, but I agreed that every player has his own way to use items.

And, the sheath Taku received was classified as a sword, and an unique item with no durability.

Although it had nearly no attack power, it did possess an additional effect called 【Holding Back】 which made the attacks made with it, not take the enemy's last 1% of HP.

Next is your turn, the two looked my way with excitement.

However, unfortunately, no matter how much I imagined 【Present Box】's content, nothing felt like "the thing" to me. Because of that, I had no choice but to betray the two's expectations.

"I'll—decorate the store with it?"

"...Well, that's just like you."

"Yeah, I guess there's no need to exchange it right away, you can exchange it when something you want comes up."

"Huh? I expected more like "you're weird!" kind of reaction."

I was surprised at their reaction being completely opposite from what I expected, but the two smiled wryly and answered.

"It's a valuable item so there's plenty of players who think it'd be a waste and leave it as is."

"There are some people in my guild, too."

The two said and laughed. Is that so, I thought with relief.

Afterwards I exchanged Quest Chips for items, I used 50 Quest Chips for 【Instant House】 and used the remaining 25 to get 【Random Box (3)】. As for the four remaining Quest Chips, I exchanged them for 4 SP.

"Well then, it's about time so I'll take my leave. It's been a nice event."

"Yeah, good work there too. The winter quest event's over, coming up next is the new year's update."

The two muttered and stood up, then after saying farewell to me they left 【Atelier】.

Although I intended to spend some time relaxing for this time's event, thinking back to it, in the end it turned out to be some busy time instead.

Still, I had lots of fun, so it's all right.

Thinking so, I decided to log out.

Epilogue - Homecoming and the Christmas Party

“Fufufu, Takumi-san, today is the day we settle it once and for all!”

“Fine by me, Miu-chan, let’s do it!”

My best friend Takumi and my little sister Miu have dominated our home’s TV standing in the corner. The Christmas party starts in the evening, but they’ve been gaming ever since noon.

Sometimes they played against each other, sometimes co-op, as they competed for victory in various games. Right now they were playing a fighting game, their characters reacted under a split second and the fierce battle appeared like some kind of strange dance. Their gaze, all of it, was poured onto the characters on the screen. When I looked at their hands accurately manipulating the controllers and the combos appearing on the screen, honestly speaking, I didn’t feel like I could copy that.

“You two... You intend on playing games all day long?”

“It’s what I brought juice and sweets for... heyyyy?!”

“Got youu!! Super combo techniqueeee!!!”

My little sister’s voice was much louder than even that of the rushing mohican meatball on the screen. And, the martial artist character Taku was playing with had lost all of his HP at once, was thrown up to dance in the air before falling, after which the KO was displayed.

“Ugh! I got distracted. One more time! I won’t let my guard down this time!”

“Then how about a racing game next? Or maybe robo battle? Or maybe sports?”

“She’s not listening...”

With that said, Miu just wouldn't calm down until Taku came, so it's hard to say what is better.

According to the schedule, Shizuka-nee will come back today. We heard approximately when will she be back, and she's supposed to make it for the Christmas party in the evening, but Miu was still all impatient so I was grateful to Taku for calming her down. While thinking about that, I drank some juice brought by Taku and watched the two.

That's when——

"I'm baack——"

"It's Shizuka-oneechan!"

"Hey, Miu! Don't run in the house!"

Dropping the controller she had in her hand, Miu rushed to the entrance in order to greet Shizuka-nee, who came on scheduled time. I raised my voice to rebuke her, but she Miu was already gone and didn't hear it.

Good grief, said Taku, paused the game and went to the entrance to greet Shizuka-nee.

"Welcome back! Whoaa! It's Shizuka-oneechan! A raw, live Shizuka-oneechan! It's Oneechan's scent!"

"Oh Miu-chan, you're still such a kid. Shun-chan, Takumi-kun, I'm back."

"Welcome back. Hurry up and come in, drink some juice and rest a little. We'll be having a party after that."

"Shizuka-san, I'll carry your luggage."

Takumi casually received Shizuka-nee's case and carried it in front of the stairs.

Miu was burying her face in Shizuka-nee's chest from the front, so I peeled her off and then gave juice and sweets to Shizuka-nee. "I feel like a guest here" she said in response.

"How long will you stay, Oneechan?"

"From Christmas until right before the coming-of-age ceremony in January, so

about two weeks. I'll take my time here until then."

"Quite long."

"University's holidays are long and sometimes they're different by the department. In my case it's not so busy, so I plan to reasonably schedule my vacations in spring and summer. It's hard to find good timing to come back from so far away."

Shizuka-nee said and heaved a small sigh, but it didn't feel too serious.

If anything, it felt like a sigh of happiness caused by a fulfilling daily life.

"Now that Shizuka-san's here, let's play games with the four of us!"

"Yees! FPS! FPS!"

"A party game would be nice. You'll play too, right, Shun-chan."

"Yes yes. To fill up the party, right."

Among those four I'm definitely the weakest, but it's been a while since we've gathered with all four of us, surely it would be fun.

The Christmas night has been spent on a game tournament. Everyone had games they were good in, and the ones I sometimes won in, were games where luck was a strong element.

Once Christmas is over, most likely each of us would start our preparations in OSO.

With the New Year's update coming up, I couldn't wait.

—STATUS—

Name : Yun

Weapon : Black Maiden's Longbow, Wolf Commander's Longbow Secondary Weapons : Magi-san's Kitchen Knife, Meat Cleaver – Heavy Black, Dismantling Kitchen Knife – Blue Dancer Armour : CS No.6 Ochre Creator (Summer and Winter Versions)

Accessory Equipment Limit 2/10

- **Faerie Ring (1)**
- **Substitute Gem's Ring (1)**

Possessed SP64

**【Longbow Lv31】【Magic Bow Lv10】【Sky Eyes Lv17】【See-Through Lv29】
【Sorcery Lv20】【Earth Element Talent Lv30】【Enchant Arts Lv44】【Taming
Lv30】【Dosing Master Lv12】【Physical Attack Increase Lv10】**

Unequipped:

**【Bow Lv50】【Swiftess Lv20】【Alchemy Lv45】【Synthesis Lv45】【Engraving
Lv26】【Crafter's Knowledge Lv7】【Cook Lv15】【Swimming Lv15】【Linguistics
Lv25】【Climbing Lv21】【Bodily Resistance Lv5】【Spiritual Resistance Lv4】
【Pre-Emptive Knowledge Lv10】【Vital Points Knowledge Lv10】**

Information:

● **New: 【Earth Element Talent】** reached level 30. A higher sense has been unlocked.

Quest Event Final Results

- **The Winter Quest Event Completion Rate——86%.**
- **The Event Rewards: 【Present Box (Unopened)】【Instant House (Unused)】
【Random Box (3)】**
- **Other Rewards:【Death Count's Choker】, Various Mixing Recipes**

Afterword

You whom I meet for the first time, you whom I meet again after a while, hello, Aloha Zachou here.

You who took this book in your hands, O-san the editor in charge, yukisan who prepared wonderful illustrations, and also all of you who have read my work on the net before it was officially published - I am really grateful to all of you. Currently the OSO series has a spin-off called Silver Muse in Dragon Magazine, and a manga drawn by Hani Kuraun (Honey Crown) running in Dragon Age. In the comic version of Yun's adventures you can see Yun's cute and comedic adventures, as well as cute and cool efforts of Myu and others who aren't so often drawn in the original work. By all means, please try it.

The "Winter Town Arc" that started in Volume 9 had the characters do various things in wonderful winter clothes, but to me personally, winter is a time of trials.

Once before when I was lodging in a warm part of Kanto region, there was no snow. Even when it was cold, I could go by wearing a thin jacket. If anything, I spent time in light clothes because the room was warmed up by air conditioner. But after continuing such life, when I returned home the situation changed completely.

In the morning the temperature fell below zero and the melting snow froze over. In my home I used a kerosene stove and kotatsu, as well as blankets and thick clothes in order to stop my bodily temperature from escaping.

The change of temperature inside the room and the drying air deprived my skin of moisture and dealt damage, so every morning when I had to leave the warm blanket I prepared myself for death.

Every day I prayed "I hope summer comes soon", and like that, I survived

spring, and it's summer now. It's hot and not very humid making it very nice for a nap and spend time. I'm thinking of splitting my time of the year, my winters in Kanto, and summers in my family house.

Please take care of me, Aloha Zachou, from now on as well.

Lastly, once again I would like to thank all those who took this book in their hands.

I'm looking forward to the day I meet you all again

July 2016, Aloha Zachou

Sense Build Data

» **Gantz**

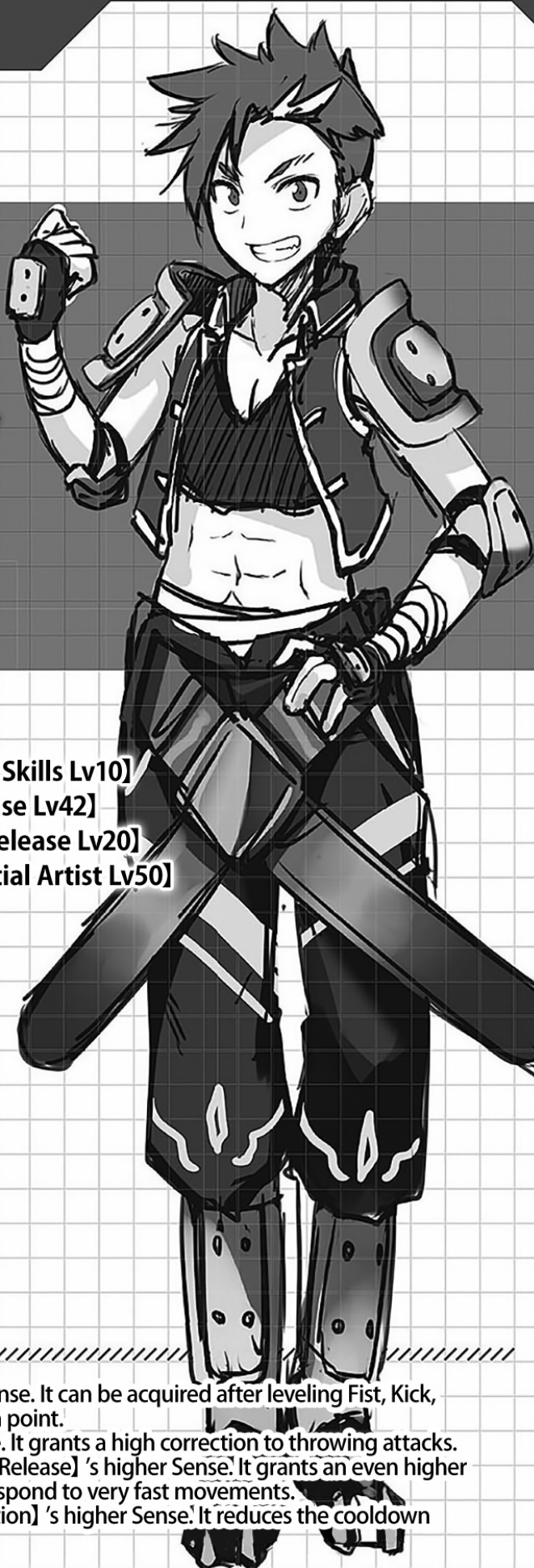
Weapon	—
Head	—
Outerwear	Street Fighter
Underwear	Anti-Monster Absorbing Supporter
Arms	Monk's Bandage
Torso	Street Fighter
Waist	Light Iron Leggings
Accessories	?

Equipped Senses ※In volume 10

[Martial Arts Skills Lv12] [Throwing Skills Lv10]
[Magic Power Lv37] [Physical Increase Lv42]
[Swiftiness Lv42]] [3D Restriction Release Lv20]
[Cooldown Nullification Lv24] [Martial Artist Lv50]
[Pre-Emptive Knowledge Lv45]
[Trap Disarm Lv18]

Unequipped

[Fist Lv32] [Kick Lv30]
[Armor Lv30] [Light Armor Lv24]
[Might Lv24]
etc...



[Martial Art Skills] is **[Martial Arts]** 's higher Sense. It can be acquired after leveling Fist, Kick, and one of the Throwing type Senses to a certain point.

[Throwing Skills] is **[Throwing]** 's higher Sense. It grants a high correction to throwing attacks.

[3D Restriction Release] is **[Action Restriction Release]** 's higher Sense. It grants an even higher correction to moving, and allows the player to respond to very fast movements.

[Cooldown Nullification] is **[Cooldown Reduction]** 's higher Sense. It reduces the cooldown after using an Art to nearly zero.

» Kei

Weapon	Mercenary's Heavy Sword
Head	—
Outerwear	Battlefield's Guardian
Underwear	Life-Saving Chainmail
Arms	Unbreakable Wind Shield
Torso	Battlefield's Guardian
Waist	Battlefield's Guardian
Accessories	?

Equipped Senses ※In volume 10

[Two-Handed Sword Lv48]
 [Large Shield Lv57] [Full Armor Lv51]
 [Magic Power Lv36] [Sturdiness Lv35]
 [Protection Lv32] [HP Increase Lv49]
 [Daunting Lv38] [Guts Lv31]
 [Battler's Knowledge Lv27]

Unequipped

[Sword Lv39] [Shield Lv42]
 [Armor Lv41] [Physical Increase Lv31]
 [Physical Attack Increase Lv47]
 [Heavy Blow Lv47]
 etc...

[Sturdiness] is [Physical Defense Increase] 's higher Sense. It grants an even higher physical defense correction. The original Sense disappears when acquired.

[Protection] is [Magic Defense Increase] 's higher Sense. It grants an even higher magical defense correction. The original Sense disappears when acquired.

[Daunting] is [Provocation] 's higher Sense. It gathers even more Hate from the enemy mobs. Has high chance of lowering non-active mob's attack power.

[Guts] is [Fighting Spirit] 's higher Sense. Decreases physical damage received, grants resistance to knockback and instant death.

[Battler's Knowledge] is [Warrior's Knowledge] 's higher Sense. Grants an even higher bonuses to all attacks and Arts used.

» Minute

Weapon	Power Staff [Reincarnation]
Head	—
Outerwear	Sacred Priestess
Underwear	—
Arms	—
Torso	Sacred Priestess
Waist	Sacred Priestess
Accessories	Golden Hexaring (2), Small Church of the Holy Cross (2), Cherub's Twin-Wing Ring (3), Ring of Samsara (1)

Equipment limit 8/10

Equipped Senses ※In volume 10

[Battle Staff Lv28] **[Cloak Lv37]** **[Sorcery Lv40]**
[Magic Power Lv61] **[Healing Lv39]**
[Heavenly Light Element Talent Lv38]
[Magic Increase Lv41] **[Chanting Reduction Lv31]**
[Magic Range Expansion Lv22]
[Healing Knowledge Lv34]

Unequipped

[Staff Lv40] **[Club Lv30]**
[Heavy Blow Lv30]
 Also resistance-type Senses, etc...

[Battle Staff] is [Staff] 's and [Club] 's combined Sense. It grants a correction to both healing magic and physical attacks, and also has the qualities of both.

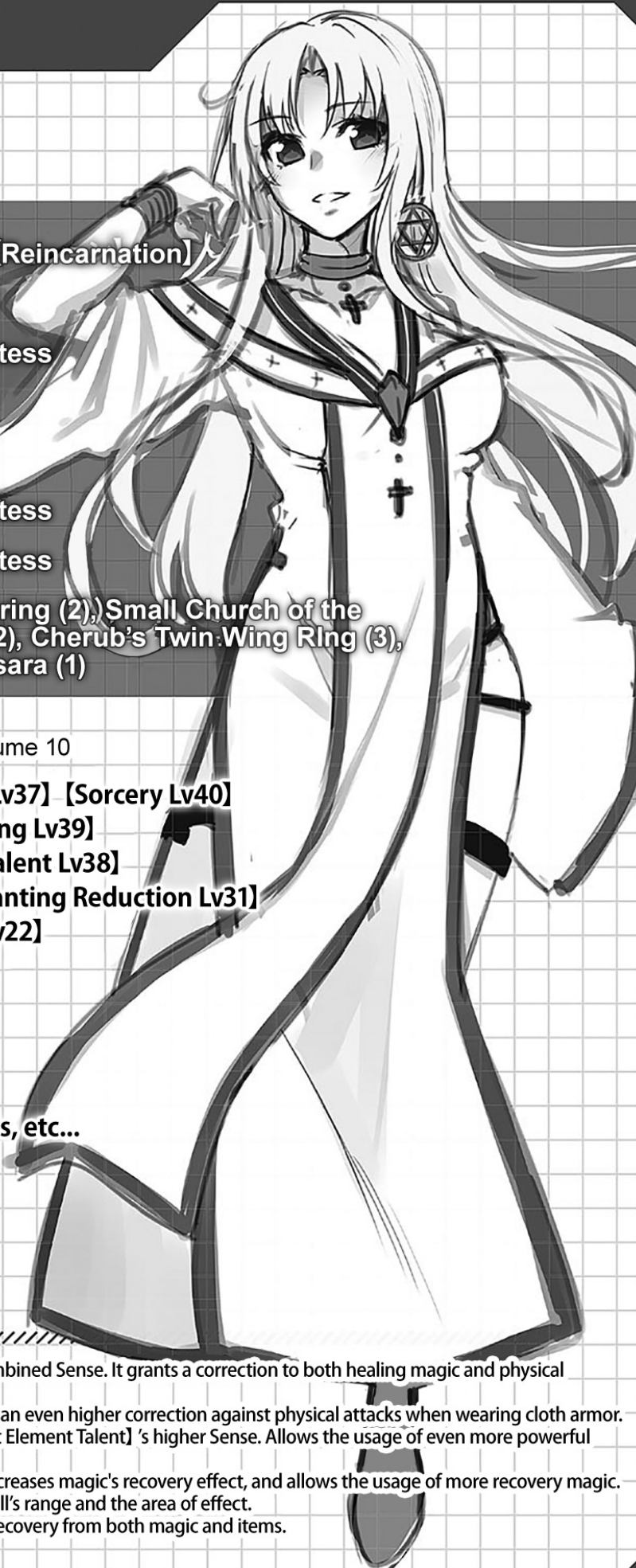
[Cloak] is [Robe] 's higher Sense. It grants an even higher correction against physical attacks when wearing cloth armor.

[Heavenly Light Element Talent] is [Light Element Talent] 's higher Sense. Allows the usage of even more powerful light magic.

[Healing] is [Recovery] 's higher Sense. Increases magic's recovery effect, and allows the usage of more recovery magic.

[Magic Range Expansion] increases a spell's range and the area of effect.

[Healing's Knowledge] adds a bonus to recovery from both magic and items.



» Mami

Weapon	Elementaler's Rod
Head	Witchy's Three-Pronged Hat
Outerwear	High Witch's Robe
Underwear	Forest Witch's Dress
Arms	Hermit's Arm
Torso	Forest Witch's Dress
Waist	—
Accessories	Wiseman's Glasses (1), Stardust Regenerator (2), Boots of a Traveling Witch (2)

Equipment limit 5/10

Equipped Senses ※In volume 10

[Long Staff Lv43] **[Magic Staff Lv18]**
[Sorcery Lv50] **[Great Magic Power Lv14]**
[Storm Element Talent Lv44] **[Magic Increase Lv45]**
[Attack Mage Lv8] **[Chanting Reduction Lv44]**
[Witch's Knowledge Lv12]
[Sorcerer's Knowledge Lv21]

Unequipped

[Staff Lv50] **[Flame Element Magic Lv41]**
[Ice Element Talent Lv39] **[Earth Element Talent Lv21]**
[Magic Attack Increase Lv45] **[MP Increase Lv28]**
[Natural MP Recovery Increase Lv30]
[Double Chanting Lv28]
[MP Consumption Reduction Lv24]
Resistance-type Senses, etc...

[Magic Staff] is a Sense Derived from **[Staff]** Sense. It grants additional correction to all types of staffs, and increases power of magic skills.

[Great Magic Power] is **[Magic Power]** 's higher Sense. Grants even more MP. (Requirement: **[Magic Power Lv70]**)

[Attack Mage] is **[Magic Attack Increase]** 's higher Sense. Grants an even larger bonus to magic attack power. When acquired, the original Sense disappears.

[Witch's Knowledge] is **[Witch Apprentice's Knowledge]** 's higher Sense. By using the MP a player possesses, it allows them to increase the power of a completed spell. There is an upper limit to how much the spell's power can be increased.

[Sorcerer's Knowledge] is **[Mage's Knowledge]** 's higher Sense. Increases spellcasting speed and adds a bonus to magic power.

